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ABSTRACT

This volume contains the following articles: "Orthography and Identity in Cameroon" (Steven Bird); "Literacy Evaluation Tool" (Becky Feldpausch, Jean Nichols, Robin Rempel); "Kenyang Literacy Program" (Tanyi Eyong Mbuagbaw); "Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E): A Brief Overview" (Ian Mowatt); "Adaptation of the Multi-Strategy Method for the Far North of Cameroon" (Susan Gravina); "SALT '98: A Short-Term Literacy Team in Cameroon" (Fiona Clayton, Jason Hunt, Ulrike Hunt, Alies Zandbergen). There are also four book reviews: "150 Ways To Increase Intrinsic Motivation in the Classroom" by J. P. Raffini (reviewed by Scott A. Satre); "Modern Chinese: a History and Sociolinguistics" by Ping Chen (reviewed by Wi-vun Taiffalo Chiung); "Local Literacies: Reading and Writing in One Community" by David Barton and Mary Hamilton (reviewed by Fiona Holburn); "Beyond Training: Perspective on Language Education" by Jack C. Richards (reviewed by Craig Soderberg). (Contains 75 references.) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education) (KFT)

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NOTES ON LITERACY

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Orthography and Identity in Cameroon

Steven Bird

The tone languages of sub-Saharan Africa raise challenging questions for the design of new writing systems. Marking too much or too little tone can have grave consequences for the usability of an orthography. Orthography development, past and present, rests on a raft of sociolinguistic issues having little to do with the technical phonological concerns that usually preoccupy orthographers. Some of these issues are familiar from the spelling reforms which have taken place in European languages. However, many of the issues faced in sub-Saharan Africa are different, being concerned with the creation of new writing systems in a multiethnic context: residual colonial influences, the construction of new nation-states, detribalization versus culture preservation and language reclamation, and so on. Language development projects which crucially rely on creating or revising orthographies may founder if they do not attend to the various layers of identity that are indexed by orthography, whether colonial, national, ethnic, local, or individual identity. In this study, I review the history and politics of orthography in Cameroon, with a focus on tone marking. This article concludes by calling present-day orthographers to a deeper and broader understanding of orthographic issues (indigenous languages, African languages, writing systems, tone-marking, language planning).[1]

[Steven Bird is associate director of the Linguistic Data Consortium, adjunct associate professor of computer science and linguistics at the University of Pennsylvania, and an international linguistics consultant for SIL. Steven first trained in computer science in his native Australia, before completing a Ph.D. in computational linguistics (Edinburgh 1990). His thesis was published as the book, *Computational Phonology: A Constraint-based Approach* (Cambridge University Press 1995). From 1995–1997

[1]This article is revised and expanded from a paper presented at the panel session, "Orthography and the Politics of Identity Construction" at the 96th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Washington, D.C., November 1997. I am grateful to the following people for stimulating discussions and for feedback on an earlier version of this article: Firmin Ahoua, Sandra Barnes, Bill Bright, Mike Cahill, Bruce Connell, Katherine Demuth, Ellen Jackson, Robert Hedinger, Nancy Hornberger, Ken Pike, Patrick Renaud, Clinton Robinson, Bill Samarin, Hal Schiffman, Maurice Tadadjeu, Steve Walter, and David Weber. I take full responsibility for the opinions expressed here, including any inaccuracies or omissions. The research was covered by a grant from the UK Economic and Social Research Council (number R00023 5540) to Edinburgh University and by research permits with the Ministry of Scientific and Technical Research of the Cameroon government. I am indebted to SIL Cameroon for providing me with the logistical support which made this research possible. This article is dedicated to the memory of Gregoire Momo.

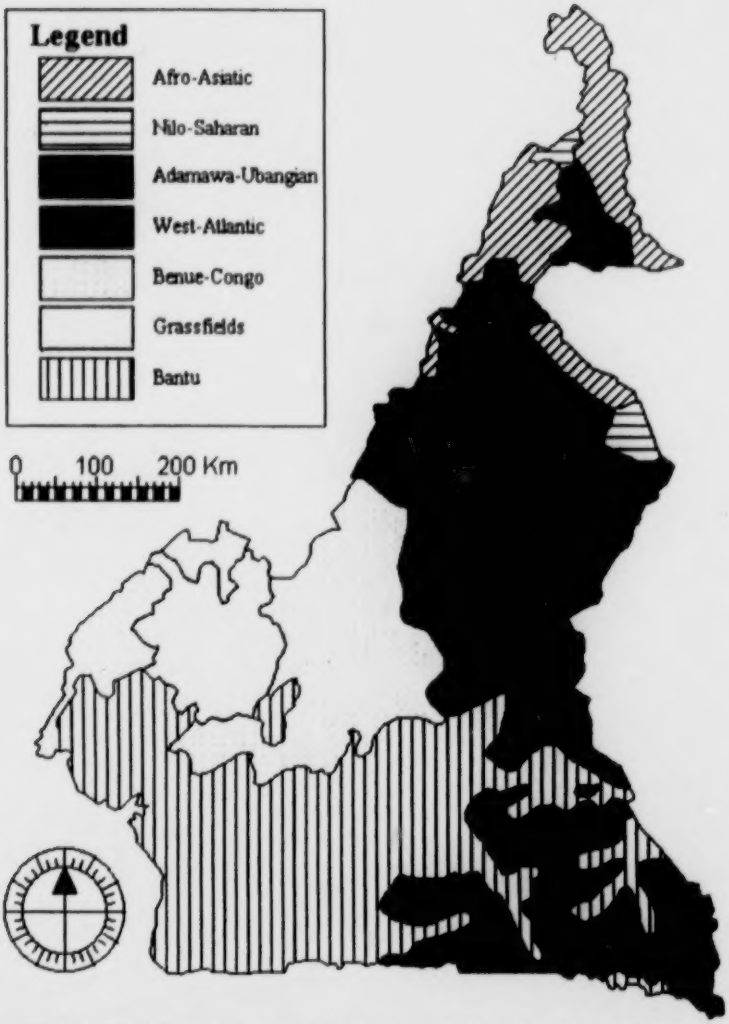

Figure 1. Cameroon language map showing principal families (after Dieu and Renaud 1983)

In all, Cameroon has some 279 languages (Grimes 1996), spoken by 15 million people (1998 est.), in an area slightly larger than California (about twice the size of the United Kingdom). Figure 1 shows the location of the main groups.

Most of Cameroon's languages are tonal. In a tone language, voice pitch on an individual syllable can differentiate lexical or grammatical meaning. The study of tone is mainly the province of phonology (Pike 1948; Fromkin 1978; van der Hulst and Snider 1993; Odden 1995). The linguistic function of tone will be illustrated using language data from Dschang [tʃaŋ], a Bamileke language[3] from the Grassfields group, spoken by over 300,000 people in the Western Province of Cameroon.

An example of lexical contrast mediated by tone is given in (1). The transcriptions employ the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), and schematic pitch transcriptions give a visual representation for the intonation contour of each word.

(1)	a.	H	*lə̀tɔ́ŋ*	[- ˊ]	feather
	b.	HL	*lə̀tˊɔ̂ŋ*	[- ˆ]	reading
	c.	LH	*lə̀tɔ̀ŋ̊*	[- -]	navel
	d.	L	*lə̀tɔ̀ŋ*	[- ˋ]	finishing

Dschang also employs tone to distinguish grammatical meanings, as illustrated in (2). Here the segmental content is constant, but the different tone melodies encode different tenses. The words used in the examples are: [əfɔ̀] 'chief', [kə̀mtɛ̀] 'bury', and [mə̀mbhˊú] 'dogs'. The word consisting of a single vowel is a grammatical "concord" marker. The correspondence between the lexical tones just given for these words, and the surface tones appearing in (2) is not very well understood, though it is primarily due to phrase-level tone-sandhi phenomena which fall outside the scope of the present article.

(2)	a.	*əfɔ̀ ɔ́ ˈkə̀mtɛ ˈmə́mbhú*	[--‾_--]	the chief buried dogs (immediate past)
	b.	*əfɔ̀ ɔ̀ kə̀mtɛ mə̀mbhˊú*	[------‾]	the chief buries dogs (simple present)

[3]Bamileke is a corruption of [mbə ləkuɔ] which means "people of the ravine". Delaroziere (1949) discusses this and other corrupted Bamileke names in more detail. Watters and Leroy (1989:435) list ten Bamileke languages, but Tadadjeu (1980:48f) resists such a "simplification". Dschang is a place name and the main town where the Yemba language is spoken. Outside this area, the Yemba language is also called "Dschang".

c. *ə̀fɔ̄ ə̀ ʻkə̀mte ʻmə́mbhɨ́* [---_--] the chief will bury dogs (immediate future)

In the early 1970s, Maurice Tadadjeu brought this language to the attention of the world's linguists (Tadadjeu 1974), and it has continued to receive much attention (Hyman and Tadadjeu (1976); Stewart (1981, 1993); Hyman (1985); Pulleyblank (1986); Bird (1999a,b)). The existing orthography for Dschang uses two diacritic symbols for representing tone, the acute accent (high tone) and the macron (mid tone), which are placed over the vowels and the nasal consonants. Low tone is unmarked. This "tone orthography" is phonemic, in the sense that an inventory of linguistically contrastive "tonemes" is identified and that tone is marked as it is pronounced in context (Pike 1948). The system is taught using a manual which contains three brief lessons on tone (Harro et al. 1990). On average, 56 percent of the vowels and syllabic nasals in a Dschang text carry a tone mark. The following text illustrates the orthography.

(3) *Kaŋ pə́ mbhū́ é lelá' ŋgɔ̄ mésɔ̄, ḿbú ńzīŋ́ ta' enɔ. Pə́ lelá' ńnāŋ te eshū́' amɔ̄' álī'ɨ́, ḿbé á ápa, ńdɔk ŋgūə́ á ŋkā' ŋíŋ njɨɨ́a apumā. Pə́ le gḗ é tṓ á ḿba, ŋgə́ɔ mbɔŋ. Pə́le gūə́ te ŋkó éwú, kaŋ á le mé mbhū́ ŋge: «Esó, pá' meŋ ŋkuə́k ḿbiŋ nzéŋ ńzāŋné lā, meŋ ē kə́ á áthū́, é kāp, o gə́ á ésī ńnɔŋ mbété ńnéŋ á ńtē á ápa.*

My first impressions of the tone marking system were gained by talking to local Cameroonians involved in literacy work. They reported that tone marking was difficult to teach, that it put people off writing the language, and that they had to add further diacritics to enable good public readings. Yet people were also quick to report how important it was to mark tone, readily reciting lists of minimal pairs, such as those listed in example (1) above. I discovered cases where a lexical tonal distinction could not be represented in the orthography. For example, the distinction between high and low tone verbs in the simple present continuous tense is only tonal, but it cannot be represented orthographically without introducing a third tone mark. This situation is fully explained in (Bird 1999c).

My study of the Dschang tone system confirmed Hyman's finding (Hyman 1985) that the tonal alternations in this language are postlexical, i.e., part of the process of uttering words in the context of a phrase. In effect, the tone patterns serve to "glue" words together into phrases. (In this respect the system functions like English phrasal intonation, which is not marked orthographically but for the limited use of punctuation symbols such as the comma.) I suspected that the tone marks were not actually helping speakers of the language, for fluent reading aloud, for comprehension, and for writing. Formal experimentation later confirmed this suspicion (Bird 1999d).

In this study, mother-tongue speakers of the Dschang language having a variety of ages and educational backgrounds, and having different levels of exposure to the orthography, were tested on location in the Western Province of Cameroon. All but one had attended classes on tone marking. Participants read texts which were marked and unmarked for tone, then added tone marks to the unmarked texts. Analysis showed that the current phonemic tone marking system for the Dschang language degrades reading fluency and does not help to resolve tonally ambiguous words. Experienced writers attain an accuracy score of 83.5 percent in adding tone marks to a text, while inexperienced writers score a mere 53 percent, which is not much better than chance. The experiment raised serious doubts about the suitability of the phonemic method of marking tone for languages having pervasive phrase-level tone-sandhi effects and lent support to the notion that a writing system should have "fixed word images". However, despite my work on linguistic analysis, on evaluating other approaches to tone orthography (Bird 1999c), and this experimental work, proposals for changing the tone orthography initially foundered. It soon became evident that change would not be brought about through linguistic argumentation but by addressing issues surrounding identity.

In understanding these issues, it is helpful to consider the following questions. First, why did surface tone marking get adopted in Dschang and other languages when it appears to be so inefficient? Second, what role has the Cameroon orthography standard played, and how has this role changed over time? And third, when is any kind of orthographic change warranted, and how can change be introduced? The ensuing discussion addresses these questions from the standpoint of the political, social, linguistic, and individual identity which orthography both engenders and builds upon. As Dewees wrote, "Questions of linguistic suitability of the orthography to the language are extremely important to the pedagogical and perhaps typographical implementation of the orthography, but the social, psychological, and political questions pertaining to how a writing system becomes established, matures, and finally reaches the stage where it begins to resist change are interesting questions on their own" (Dewees 1977:122).

In this article I contend that these questions are not only interesting, but crucial for orthographers working in sub-Saharan Africa.

3. The colonial period

The Europeans who first penetrated Africa not only brought European inventions and ideas, but they also arrived with "linguistic cultural baggage" (Samarin 1984). Included with this baggage were European orthographic traditions. "A random patchwork of colonial languages was superimposed

on the already complex map of African languages, and the latter were exposed to the varying orthographic traditions of at least six different European languages (Baker et al. 1982:5).

Orthographic practice in Cameroon was no exception. For example, the affricate [tʃ] was transcribed as *ch*, *tch*, or *tsch*, depending on whether the transcription was based on English, French or German, respectively. Douala, a major Bantu language of southern Cameroon, had three orthographies. These are illustrated in (4), where the columns show corresponding forms in each orthography.[4]

(4) The three orthographies of Douala (Stoll 1955:7)

British	*ɛ*	*ɔ*	*oa*	*ny*	*ma bola*	*mienge*
German	*ɛ*	*ɔ*	*wa*	*ń*	*mabola*	*myenge*
French	*e*	*o*	*oa*	*ñ*	*mabola*	*mienge*

In order to appreciate how this situation arose in Cameroon, it is necessary to understand some details of colonial history. The colonial period began with growing European trading along the West African coast in the late 1700s and into the 1800s. By 1800, Britain dominated the Nigerian and Cameroonian coast, and Pidgin English was the primary language of commerce (Fonlon 1969:10f). The English Baptist Mission was established in Cameroon by Alfred Saker in 1845, and it was responsible for the first orthography for the Douala language. Germany narrowly beat Britain and France in the race to annexe "Kamerun" (1884) and began its conquest of the hinterland. The German explorers distributed flags, adopted traditional leaders into the colonial administration, and informed the locals that their land and people were now German.

The English missionaries, who were responsible for the majority of the schools, were expelled by the German administration and replaced by German-speaking missionaries (the Basel Mission). The American Presbyterian missionaries, established in South Eastern Cameroon since the 1870s, were allowed to stay on condition that they replaced English with German (Fonlon 1969:15f). During this period, Douala and other languages were given German-based orthographies.

With the outbreak of World War I, Britain invaded Cameroon from the west, and France invaded from the south. The territory was partitioned in 1916. By giving up its claims to German East Africa, France won over 80 percent of Cameroon, thereby gaining control of an uninterrupted stretch of territory from Algiers on the Mediterranean to Brazzaville in the Congo

[4]Since Stoll produced this summary, a fourth orthography has been developed which conforms to the General Alphabet of Cameroon Languages (Tadadjeu and Sadembouo 1979).

(Fanso 1989:55). The German missions and their vernacular educational programs were now transferred to French missionaries.

The French administration tried to assimilate their new subjects and spread French civilization. "The policy aimed at assimilating or absorbing France's colonial subjects to the point where they would actually be Frenchmen linguistically, culturally, politically and legally" (Fanso 1989:65). Now French was taught in the schools, and "it was considered essential that instruction in the other subjects should be in French almost from the first day in school" (Fonlon 1969:20). As incentive to the independent mission schools, the administration offered a subsidy to raise staff salaries by two-thirds on condition that French be used as the medium of instruction (p. 70).

All of the orthographies developed during the colonial period were inspired by colonial languages.[5] The fact that these orthographies adopted the sound distinctions, the characters, and the pronunciation rules of the successive colonial powers was symbolic of the subsidiary status ascribed to the languages. Tone was the most notable amongst the ignored sound distinctions; the colonial orthographers were completely naive about tone (Tucker 1964:610). These facts were later exploited in nationalist rhetoric.

By the end of the colonial period, orthographies were established for about a dozen languages (Bot Ba Njock 1966:10), including Douala, Ewondo, Fe'fe', and Basaa.

4. Linguistic identity in newly independent Cameroon

In 1960, the newborn nation state, the Federal Republic of Cameroon, was bequeathed a linguistic situation of bewildering complexity. Fonlon's prosaic summation of the situation leads to a striking conclusion:

> Cameroon, thanks to its geographical position, has the singular character of being the one spot on the black continent where all the African peoples meet: here you have the Bantu who claim kinship with peoples as far South as the Cape, you have Sudanese peoples, you have the Fulani whose kinsfolk are found as far West as Senegal and Mauritania, you have Hamito-Semitic peoples like the Shuwa Arabs, you have the pygmies of the equatorial jungle. Thus, it is in Cameroon that the *African Confusion of Tongues* is worse confounded; and it has become absolutely impossible to achieve,

[5]The non-roman Bamum orthography (Dugast and Jeffreys 1993) is an apparent exception to this claim. However, the idea of writing language was inspired by the existence of orthographies for Arabic and for the languages of the colonizers, and a German missionary was also implicated.

> through an African language, that oneness of thought and feeling and will that is the heart's core and the soul of a nation. We are left with no choice but to strive to achieve this unity through non-African languages; and, to make things more difficult, the Federal Republic of Cameroon, being composed of the former Southern Cameroons, British administered, and the former French Cameroons, has inherited two of them—French and English; and has therefore been obliged to become, constitutionally, a bilingual State. (Fonlon 1969:9f, emphasis in original)

Thus, there was "no choice" but for Cameroon to become officially bilingual in English and French. Contrary to expectation, African identity would not be compromised but enhanced. In the words of President Ahmadou Ahidjo:

> As far as culture is concerned, we must in fact refrain from any blind and narrow nationalism and avoid any complex when absorbing the learning of other countries. When we consider the English language and culture and the French language and culture, we must regard them not as the property of such and such a race but as an acquirement of the universal civilization to which we belong. That is in fact why we have followed the path of bilingualism since we consider not only that it is in our interests to develop these two world-wide languages in our country but that furthermore it offers us the means to develop this new culture which I have just mentioned and which could transform our country into the catalyst of African unity. (Ahidjo 1964)

In order to redirect and expand the education system, outside help was needed. Following the Ebolowa Conference of 1962, UNESCO funded a nationwide literacy program in English and French, which had 7,500 literacy centers *("l'Ecole sous l'Arbre")* at its peak. The program ran until around 1969, when it declined due to the lack of external funding (SIL 1987:12). Apart from the reliance on external funding, the shortage of well-trained and well-motivated teachers was a key problem in these years (Bot Ba Njock 1966:7).

At the same time as French and English were receiving vigorous attention, literacy in the indigenous languages had been halted. Tribal identity had been a threat to the colonial administrations,[6] and now it was a threat to the state.[7] The promotion of literacy in the indigenous languages was based in the schools; the government now asserted tight control over the education

[6]Key examples of the tribal resistance to the colonial administrations are the events surrounding the execution of King Bell (Rudolf Duala Manga) by the Germans in 1914 (B. 1956) and the exile and death in custody of King Njoya of Bamum under the French (1929–1931).

[7]Bamgbose (1991:1) considers this issue in the broader context of sub-Saharan Africa.

system and stopped these programs. For example, in Dschang, the school established by chief Djoumessi was raided by the state authorities, and the books, typewriters, and duplicator were confiscated. The aim was to halt education in the local language. Gregoire Momo, Djoumessi's brother and director of the school from 1946–1959, describes the seizure as "an act of vandalism in a period when the government did not take account of cultural treasure" (Momo 1997:13, my translation). Similar events were widespread, both in Cameroon and elsewhere in Africa, such as in Ethiopia. "Haile Selassie saw in ethnic languages, and particularly *afaan Oromoo*, an obstacle to his 'nation-building' project. Hence, possession of Oromo literature was declared illegal, and existing works in the Oromo language were destroyed" (Bulcha 1997).

Yet language policy and practice are frequently at odds, as Schiffman (1996) has extensively demonstrated. Fonlon made the same observation for Cameroon: "de jure, Cameroon has become a bilingual state; but, de facto, it is a highly diversified multi-lingual, multi-cultural country" (1969:28). Just how diverse was not known. Henri Bot Ba Njock, probably the most prominent Cameroonian linguist at the time, estimated Cameroon's stock of indigenous languages at ninety (Bot Ba Njock 1966:4). We now know that Cameroon has at least three times this many languages, thanks to extensive survey work by Dieu and Renaud (1983), Breton and Fohtung (1991), and SIL Cameroon.

In those days, linguistic diversity was not something to be emphasized, much less acknowledged even. But at least it was possible to acknowledge the challenges that lay ahead. Two visionary articles written at this time had almost identical titles but rather different outlooks. In his piece, *The Language Problem in Cameroon*, Fonlon argued that "the target to aim at, for us, should be, not merely State bilingualism, but *individual bilingualism*: that every child that passes through our education system shall be able to speak and write both English and French" (1969:35, emphasis in original). Bot Ba Njock, in his piece *Le problème linguistique au Cameroun*, pointed out that, while Cameroon had chosen two official languages, it did not yet have any **national** languages. He argued for the selection of regional languages, one for each "linguistic zone" in the country (Bot Ba Njock 1966:12). To this day neither vision has been realized.

By the 1970s, a small group lead by Bot Ba Njock and François de Gastines began to reassert the importance of indigenous languages. In order for their message to be heard by the post-colonial leadership, they tacitly adopted some of the same assumptions concerning linguistic identity. Jaffe (1996:818) has called it the "European political ideology of language", which is grounded in the idea that "linguistic identity is a prerequisite for cultural identity and political stability". The group also argued that, for primary school education, literacy in the mother tongue was a better route

to French and English literacy than using French and English from the start (Bot Ba Njock 1966:8f). Indigenous languages and literacy became safe topics once more. Although it was to take two generations of linguists, this group engineered a remarkable transition, from "preaching in the wilderness" (p. 3) to being employed by the government to coordinate language planning for the country. Just how this came about is described in the next two sections.

5. Revival of mother-tongue literacy

Henri Bot Ba Njock was head of the linguistics department at the then Federal University of Cameroon and former student of the eminent French linguist, André Martinet. He had proposed a unified alphabet for the languages of central Africa at the UNESCO-sponsored conference on orthography in Yaoundé in 1970 (Tadadjeu (1975:61); Baker et al. (1982:26)). François de Gastines was a French Jesuit priest at Collège Libermann, a prestigious Jesuit secondary school in Douala. Since the late 1960s, Bot Ba Njock and de Gastines organized annual workshops on indigenous languages at the Federal University and at Collège Libermann. "The main purpose of the workshops was to train secondary and primary school teachers, as well as other well-motivated individuals, to use the phonemic alphabet for the transcription of the specific languages studied" (Tadadjeu 1975:61). Little information is available about these meetings except for the important collection of papers that came out of the 1974 meeting (de Gastines 1974).

It was a daunting challenge to make the case for mother-tongue education, as evidenced by the careful strategizing which had begun by the group. In the early days, members of the group placed themselves at personal risk, given the inherent dangers of encouraging tribal languages. At the political level, they sought to persuade the governing UNC (Cameroon National Union) that: "if the UNC really wants to be a party of the masses, it must reach the masses. And for that, there are no options but for the party to speak the [indigenous] languages spoken by Cameroonians" (Bot Ba Njock et al. 1974:126f). In education, they pointed out that the government's emphasis on rural education could founder, since it had not taken the non-French, non-English environment of the child into consideration. Primary school children were deserting school in droves, partly because the teaching was not adapted to their needs and subjected them to "psychological and cultural trauma" (Bot Ba Njock 1966:7). In the socio-economic arena, they argued that the people needed to be informed about health, agriculture, and tourism for the greater interests of the country, and this could only be done effectively using indigenous languages. The conclusion, while apologetic, linked language development to national unity.

> Cameroonian languages can, despite what one might think, contribute to the harmonious development of our country and to national unity. (Bot Ba Njock et al. 1974:128)
>
> Language planning [in Cameroon] should offer some means of maintaining and fostering national unity. This is a sine qua non condition for the acceptability of any proposed plan. (Tadadjeu 1975:72)
>
> The transcription of our languages has nothing to do with non-African languages. (Bot Ba Njock 1974:45)

From this point on, linguistic arguments for language development and for orthography creation and change had a rhetorical element, which indirectly referenced national or African identity.

Similar situations are found elsewhere. Mary Beavon (pers. comm. 1996), an SIL linguist in southeast Cameroon, recounts that Bot Ba Njock told villagers in the Nzime language area that they should not consider themselves to be true Cameroonians unless they write using tone marks, since these are distinctively Cameroonian whereas writing without tone marks is European. This gives us a key insight to the first question that was posed at the outset. Although established on linguistic principles, tone marking owed its continued existence primarily to nationalism and scientism. For many languages, no one checked to see that tone marking actually helped reading and writing fluency and comprehension. There was no obvious reason to do so. Parallel cases abound. For example, Hornberger reports the three-vowel versus five-vowel controversy for Quechua (Peru): "The Peruvian linguists' defense of Quechua includes vigilance for its purity from the influence of Spanish. They argue that writing Quechua with five vowels imposes Spanish conventions on Quechua and makes Quechua subservient to Spanish, which they view as another form of colonialism" (1995:198). Another situation is the tone and vowel-length marking in Navajo, where Fishman observes that "such insertions may, therefore, come to have a certain authenticity appeal which can be ideologically activated and cultivated" (Fishman 1988:275). An early example, dating from the fourteenth century, is the Abur alphabet devised by St. Stefan of Perm. This alphabet was based on the Greek and Church Slavonic alphabets, but St. Stefan "deliberately made the forms of the letters sufficiently different from either so that the Komi could regard the writing system as distinctively theirs and not an alphabet for another language" (Ferguson 1967:206).

The logistical problem of choosing which languages to develop first, given limited resources, promised to wreak havoc. The process of choosing one language in preference to another would surely amount to tribalism. Here "linguistic science" promised some easy answers. "Before resolving the

problem, it is important to remember that linguistics is a science, and as such it wants to be objective. Linguistics is founded on impartial observations and the facts of language. It is not prescriptive or normative and its principles are neither aesthetic or moral....The choice between languages must operate on objective criteria, on a purely scientific basis" (Bot Ba Njock et al. 1974:132).

"Linguistic science" could also remedy the confusion of incommensurate orthographies which had arisen during the colonial period. The IPA-based Africa Script (International African Institute 1930) was an orthography standard for Africa developed by the phoneticians Westermann, Passy, Jones, Lloyd James, and others (Tucker 1971).[8] This laid the foundation for the *General Alphabet of Cameroon Languages* (Tadadjeu and Sadembouo 1979). It is significant that the introduction to this historic document cited UNESCO and the regional orthography meetings (Bamako 1966, Yaoundé 1970, Niamey 1978) giving it an international dimension, effectively buttressing it against local criticism. Furthermore, the introduction carefully closed with an appeal to national identity once more.[9] "Any Cameroonian can use [the General Alphabet] in his effort to learn to read and write his own language or any other Cameroon language" (Tadadjeu and Sadembouo 1979:2).

Linking a standard orthography to national unity is a valid strategy. "A common script is a strong tool for unification. Neither China nor Mesopotamia would have survived and prospered without it" (Gaur 1984:183). These ideographic scripts could be understood by all. In contrast, the shared IPA-based script of Cameroon has limited value for facilitating inter-ethnic communication, and so the link with national unity is rather tenuous. However, this misses the point. The purpose behind the above statement was to evoke national identity in support of a new orthography standard. The idea continues to be reiterated.

> ...any person who learns to read one Cameroonian language...will already be able to read any other Cameroonian language, even if he doesn't understand what he reads.... (Tadadjeu, in Hartell 1993:58)
>
> ...perfect knowledge of the general principles of transcription permits us to read any language, even if we cannot understand what we read. (Sadembouo, in SIL (1987), my translation)

[8]Baker (1997:107) describes the Africa Script in more detail and sets it in historical context.

[9]Of course this is a simplistic invocation of national identity. As one reviewer pointed out, "Different orthographic choices cannot just be judged as efficient or deficient relative to national identity. Rather, they may support different notions of the nation (or any other form of identity)."

6. No longer on the defensive

By the early 1980s, the promoters of indigenous language development had gained confidence. The earlier argument for indigenous language development had been expressed in an in-house publication of Collège Libermann. Now, the Science and Technology Review of the government science agency DGRST (Délégation Générale à la Recherche Scientifique et Technique) published Bot Ba Njock's paper which explicitly linked the mastering of indigenous (now called **national**) languages to the mastering of socioeconomic, cultural, and political development (Bot Ba Njock 1981). And national identity was not the only identity one could reference; orthography development in Cameroon was now linked to **African** linguistic integration (Tadadjeu 1981).

Although the General Alphabet was not made official by the government at the time (Bot Ba Njock 1981:90) or subsequently, this did not prevent its adoption as a standard in the country, marking the start of a new politics of orthography. The authors of the General Alphabet now worked for CREA (Centre de Recherches et d'Etudes Anthropologiques), the government body responsible for approving externally-funded anthropological and linguistic research in Cameroon, including all language development projects. The General Alphabet could be strictly enforced for these externally-funded projects, and these projects had the resources to publish pedagogical materials. The orthography standard was retroactively enforced. For example, the SIL project on Lamnso was forced to replace the orthography developed a decade earlier with a new system which conformed to the national standard (Karl Grebe, pers. comm. 1996). Various digraphs were replaced with their IPA counterpart (e.g., ng → ŋ). Existing pedagogical materials had to be discarded and fresh materials had to be prepared, published and distributed, diverting limited resources away from other areas of language development. In stark contrast, major languages like Douala and Ewondo were immune to the standard; they did not depend on an inflow of external resources and so CREA had no control over them.

The distinction between the orthographies controlled by CREA and the orthographies that CREA could not touch was further buttressed by technological developments. The orthography standard could not be widely adopted for internally-resourced language development projects, since the "Central African Typewriter"—alluded to by Tadadjeu (1975:61)—was never realized and since the cost of converting a conventional typewriter was prohibitive.[10] On the contrary, externally-resourced language development

[10]Lux and Lux (1996:18) report that the cost of converting a manual typewriter to handle the diacritics required for the Noni language costs approximately US$44.

projects could make use of computer technology for handling special fonts within a few years of publication of the standard (Baer 1984).

The new orthography standard also included specifications for tone marking. For example, SIL linguists working on Chadic languages in the north of Cameroon believed that tone marking was not necessary since the functional load of tone[11] was evidently very low. However, they were overruled by the standard. The minimal use of tone in these languages was enough for them to be classed as tone languages, and tone languages had to be written with tone marks, period. Accordingly, there are non-tonal languages with gratuitous tone marking (many Chadic languages) alongside tone languages without tone marking (Douala and Ewondo). According to Robert Hedinger (pers. comm. 1997), the situation among Chadic languages was heavily influenced by linguists who argued that expatriates should be able to read the texts without knowing the language in question, a task which is greatly assisted by tone marks. The same situation is found elsewhere. "It is probable that the indication of vowel length and tone in modern Navajo orthography is primarily an aid to outside linguists and teachers whose mother tongue is English, rather than an aid for Navajo mother tongue readers and writers" (Fishman 1988:275).

The pattern of adoption of the new orthography standard in Cameroon described above added a new layer of complexity. In imposing an across-the-board solution to the tone-marking problem, substantive issues were swept under the rug, and a new kind of identity arrived on the scene, that of the language planning professional.

7. Devolution and pragmatism

Under pressure from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to streamline the civil service in the late 1980s, the Cameroon government closed down CREA. Language development work continued, but was no longer under central control. This mirrored a more general climate change in the country towards democratization. Language development was now to be based around "language committees", small groups of interested individuals promoting literacy at the grassroots level, linked into a loose network called the National Association of Cameroon Language Committees (NACALCO).

Now that the teeth were removed from the orthography standard and the decision-making process was devolved, the General Alphabet came to

[11]The functional load of an orthographic feature is the extent to which users of the orthography rely on that feature in reading and writing the language. The only way to be certain about issues of functional load is through actual experimentation. See (Bird 1999c:14) for a more extended discussion of this point.

serve as an "ideal" rather than a restrictive standard. Now it is useful as a yardstick, permitting linguists to see how far an orthography deviates from the norm. According to Tadadjeu (pers. comm. 1997), deviations are acceptable provided they are properly justified.

Today, there is a small but stable base of institutional support for orthography development in Cameroon. Departments of linguistics foster the academic discussion, NACALCO ensures systematic application throughout the country, and language committees implement the orthographies in specific languages. With active projects in some twenty language areas, SIL has collaborative links at every level, as well as playing host to annual training courses in phonology, orthography, and literacy for Cameroonians. The 1995 National Forum on Education and the 1996 Constitution represented a change in official policy, strongly favoring the development of Cameroonian languages.

8. Ethnic, local, and individual identity

The speaker of an indigenous language of Cameroon (and Africa more generally) references two conflicting sets of identities, the official/national/imported versus the personal/local/indigenous (Robinson 1996:§6). This "sociocultural dichotomy" plays out in many spheres: the use of local languages versus European languages;[12] reference to oral versus written tradition; working according to traditionally-defined gender roles versus salaried work; deriving personal status from one's predefined role in village affairs versus status through achievement; the structures which comprise traditional chiefdoms versus national administration, and so on. These two structures coexist. "In Cameroon there is no group which is unaffected by this situation, no individual who is not in some way caught up in it" (Robinson 1996:244). Therefore, any discussion of orthography in terms of official, national, and imported identity needs to be balanced by a discussion of personal, local, and indigenous identity. For concreteness I shall focus on the situation that I observed in Dschang.

8.1 Ethnic identity

Inspired by the orthography work of King Njoya, Sultan of Bamum, chief Djoumessi of Foréké-Dschang commissioned Isaac Etia, the principal interpreter in Dschang, to create an orthography for the Dschang language in 1928. Originally from Douala, Etia had been exposed to the orthographies for Douala and borrowed from them. For example, *e* [ɛ] came from German-Douala and *ñ* [ɲ] came from French-Douala. (Tone marks

[12]The existence of indigenous lingua-francas such as Fulfulde adds another layer of complexity.

were added much later, due to the influence of Father Stoll, author of Stoll (1955).) Djoumessi's visionary work on developing his language was linked to the preservation of local culture and identity, a view that has since become commonplace.

> You say that studying your mother tongue does not lead to professional employment. For you schooling simply serves to open the door to professional employment, but for me it is something else. It is the means of training for life....I would start with what I already possess [my language and culture] and add what is given me, rather than abandoning what I possess to look for what I might be given. (speech by chief Djoumessi, translated and abridged from Momo 1997:10)

Now Djoumessi's work was limited to one dialect of the language. The villages comprising the Dschang cluster each speak a slightly different dialect (Haynes and Harro 1985). Today, two particular dialects have come to dominate the scene, centering on the Bafou and Foréké-Dschang villages. Although these principal dialects have over 90 percent lexical similarity, the orthographies have developed independently and are different to this day. We find numerous cases of spurious differences, where the same spoken form is spelled differently, or where the same spelled form is pronounced differently in the two dialects. This has had the effect of making the dialects appear more different than they really are. Although this is a common practice elsewhere (cf. Malay/Indonesian), it was contrary to the intention of the designers of the orthographies. As Hyman has pointed out, "Tadadjeu's work on Dschang has attempted to unite the different dialects into one literary movement" (Hyman 1985:78), a desire made explicit in Tadadjeu's sixth principle of African linguistic integration, which states that every language must have a unique written form (Tadadjeu 1981:80). In other words, dialect differences should not be reflected in the orthography. However, the adoption of an IPA-based orthography standard has made such integration difficult. The situation remains unresolved to this day, as is evident from the recently published dictionary for the language which avoids the issue of orthography standardization by simply listing both orthographic forms of all words (Bird and Tadadjeu 1997).

The Dschang dialect group is part of a larger Bamileke group that is essentially coextensive with the Western Province of Cameroon. Tadadjeu reported the illusion of a single Bamileke language and, citing Sadembouo, traces this to a confusion between ethnicity and language (Tadadjeu 1980:47). Rather than disabuse people of this assumption, Tadadjeu views it as a positive factor which should be exploited in the interests of intercommunication and unity amongst the Bamileke people(s). A common alphabet would have a powerful unifying force (Tadadjeu 1980:49). While a single Bamileke alphabet has not been achieved, the ethnic significance

of one of the orthographic symbols is quite striking. A ubiquitous orthographic trait of the Bamileke languages is the barred-u symbol *ʉ*. Bamilekes who are literate in their mother tongue strongly identify with this symbol. It iconifies the strong cultural unity of the group with respect to the languages outside the group. These other languages, most notably the non-Bamileke Grassfields languages, also have this high central vowel and yet it is symbolized using *i*. Tadadjeu, coauthor of the IPA-derived orthography standard (Tadadjeu and Sadembouo 1979), guards the use of *ʉ* for Dschang, even though it violates both the letter and the spirit of the standard. This attachment to an orthographic symbol has been called "orthographic fetishism" (cf. Schiffman 1996:116).

In Ngyemboon, another Bamileke language, the sound was represented as *yu* in the orthography, following Anderson's analysis of *ʉ* as a palatalized *u* (Anderson 1977). Some years after Anderson's departure the Ngyemboon language committee wanted to switch to using *ʉ*, because this symbol was "more Bamileke" and this would facilitate wider acceptance of the written language. Before proceeding they wanted the approval of a linguist. With Anderson's approval I encouraged them to adopt the *ʉ* grapheme, knowing the indeterminacy of phonological analysis and the importance of ethnic identity in motivating mother-tongue literacy.

8.2 Individual identity

Many individuals and small groups of individuals have played important roles in the Dschang orthography: literacy workers, prominent individuals in the language committee, and expatriate linguists. Each of these will be considered in turn.

First, the literacy workers are local villagers and primary school teachers who are literate in the language and have attended a six-week teacher training course run jointly by NACALCO and SIL. They are a crucial group in the language development program and derive some prestige from being able to write the language well, from their appreciation of the culture, from their broad knowledge of the oral literature which they are helping to preserve, and from their close association with an external authority (Fishman 1988:276).

The language development work depends on them for its success. The literacy workers were opposed to orthographic changes I proposed, claiming that the changes were too radical. They were unpersuaded by the findings from the pilot experiment which led to the larger experiment (Bird 1999d). Having mastered such a complex tone orthography, it was not in their interest to make the task easier for others. Perhaps they thought that their status was at risk (Fishman 1988:277) or that the skill on which their

livelihoods depended was under threat. Gregersen made a much more grandiose version of the same point in his critique of English orthography: "Any spelling that requires several years to master, perforce plays into whatever class struggle exists" (Gregersen 1977:427). Returning to Africa, Gregersen has this to say about the situation in Nigeria, Cameroon's neighbor:

> Wolff, in his recommendations for practical orthographies for Nigerian languages, discusses the problem of writing tones and hopes that it can one day be solved. He believes that the problem can more easily be dealt with when everyone is literate. On the contrary, I believe the problem will be considerably greater then because once entrenched, *an orthography is apparently perpetuated by the vested interests of those who know it and are unwilling to learn another.* Also, there are various cultural reasons for maintaining what has become part of a heritage (Gregersen 1977:435, emphasis mine).

The second group is the language committee, a self-appointed group of interested individuals, affiliated to NACALCO, which typically includes some of the literacy workers. This group is meant to carry out the local administration of a language development project. Such groups are typically comprised of literacy workers, village elders, pastors, expatriate linguists, and (occasionally) city-based élites. As with any such group which cuts across so many walks of life, the dynamics are complex. I am aware of cases when such groups have made important orthography decisions, where a key individual has either blocked or forced through a decision. While the social standing of these individuals was important, their ability to summon naive linguistic arguments to rationalize their case lent considerable weight to their position. The linguistic connection made by such arguments evidently served a sociolinguistic function, namely to reference a certain kind of identity. In some cases, Cameroonians had previously been equipped with linguistic knowledge in order to enhance their value as linguistic informants. In the context of an elicitation session, this knowledge was controlled by the expatriate linguist. When the context was switched from elicitation to language planning, this linguistic knowledge was no longer controlled. The orthography discussion became a site of contested identity, with implications for who would play the role of expert.

This brings us to the third category, the resident expatriate linguists, who typically have a special stake in the program. These are supremely dedicated individuals who have devoted years of their lives to the development of a language and have provided crucial economic, logistical, and technical support. In cases where they were primarily responsible for the creation of an orthography, it is easy for them to identify with it. In many situations, difficult decisions have had to be taken on such issues as which dialect to use as the principal basis of the writing system, which symbols to use for

each sound, which morphemes to write as independent words, how words are to be spelled, how tone is marked, and so on. For tone marking alone a bewildering variety of options is available (Bird 1999c). Even in cases where such linguists were not responsible for the orthography, phonemic tone marking (the standard in Cameroon, cf. example (3)), serves the needs of expatriate linguists admirably well. They can give fluent reading performances, with correct production of the tone, and these are highly motivational for mother-tongue literacy: "[I]f those outsiders could do a perfect rendition of one of our traditional stories from a written text, then surely we can too." Speakers of the language regularly equate such fluent reading performances with mastery of the language, just so long as the correct tones are used, and the linguists can win much kudos as a result. It was not surprising that they see no pressing need for change. And besides, if an orthography change is introduced, who will revise the pedagogical materials, finance new print runs, and retrain the literacy teachers?

As an expatriate linguist myself, I was concerned to have tangible signs of my contribution. This went beyond the need to deliver concrete results and publish theoretical papers to satisfy the UK Economic and Social Research Council, who funded the work. I hoped that wide-ranging research on phonology would generate orthography recommendations. Moreover, I mistakenly assumed that the primary test for the merit of these recommendations was whether or not they were adopted and resulted in change that could be shown to be beneficial. They could have been just as useful in informing decisions yet to be made for the orthographies of related languages. When faced with the forces described above, I ceased making recommendations of simplified tone orthographies and embarked on the study which is reported above.

The foregoing discussion of ethnic and individual identity actually points to the existence of a complex dynamic between local and traditional structures on the one hand, and colonial and national institutions on the other hand. An expatriate orthographer needs to find ways to become closely integrated into this historical and sociocultural milieu or else stand apart and impose solutions from the outside. In many cases the latter approach has yielded success, as measured in terms of recognized orthographies and published literature. Yet in some cases the success is superficial, and the orthography and literature quickly falls out of use once its external supporter has left the scene.

9. Conclusion

At the outset I set myself three questions to answer. The first is to explain why surface tone marking was adopted in Dschang and other languages

when it appears to be so inefficient. I pointed out that, for many languages, no one actually checked to see that tone marking helped reading fluency or comprehension. This was because issues of orthographic efficiency were not included in the discussion. However, Tadadjeu expresses reservations about this claim: "It is not 100 percent accurate to say that no one checked to see that tone marking actually helped reading fluency....The debate on the issue has never been closed. It is an open debate. But I believe that tone marking per se should not be questioned. The issue is only how to properly mark the tones" (Tadadjeu, pers. comm. 1997).

I believe that debate on the issue was indeed closed, from the time of publication of the General Alphabet in 1979 until the demise of CREA in the early 1990s. The debate on the issue is only now being reopened, and this is timely given the unexpected negative findings of Bernard et al. (1995) and Bird (1999d).

The second question concerned the role of the Cameroon orthography standard and how this role has changed over time. The 1970s were a period of enlightenment. National identity was enhanced, not compromised, by promoting the indigenous languages. Using the technology of linguistics, the orthographies of indigenous languages could now be cut loose from their colonial past. In the words of Bot Ba Njock, this would be proof that speakers of these languages were truly Cameroonian. This was a period of immense fervor amongst a group of Catholic and Cameroonian scholars, whose agenda was viewed as potentially subversive by the political establishment. The climax of this period was the General Alphabet of Cameroon Languages (Tadadjeu and Sadembouo 1979). The publication of this document marked the transition to a new period of orthographic history.

The 1980s can be viewed as a period of orthographic fundamentalism in Cameroon. The orthography standard was absolute, and it had linguistic science and the West African orthography conferences on its side (with regular reminders that these conferences were UNESCO sponsored). These were the highest authorities available. A tone language had to be given an orthography with tone marks, regardless of the functional load of tone in the language.

In recent years the official interpretation of the orthography standard has changed again. In the words of Tadadjeu himself, it now represents "an ideal". Deviation can be countenanced. Wide-ranging discussion of orthography options is now possible. Experimentation, like that described in (Bird 1999d), is welcomed by Tadadjeu and NACALCO. In short, colonial naiveté, nationalistic suppression of tribalism, and linguistic scientism have all given way to a new climate of openness. Our third question, concerning when orthographic change is warranted and how it can be introduced, still requires a cautious answer.

10. Towards a deeper understanding

Contrary to widespread practice, linguistic analysis alone does not provide an adequate foundation for an orthography, nor does it provide adequate impetus for orthographic change. As Fishman pointed out (see §1), deeper and broader understanding are necessary. Concerning orthography and tone marking in Cameroon (and other central and west African countries), I believe there are opportunities for developing a deeper and broader understanding in the following areas.

Linguistics

It is almost universally assumed that phonological study alone is what informs orthography; other areas of linguistics are simply out of the picture. This is an unfortunate assumption. Strangely, while linguistics seldom speaks with one voice, the use of a linguistic argument often counts as incontrovertible support for a particular orthographic proposal. A better use of linguistics is as a source of insights about orthography options and as a tool to probe the orthographic insights of native speakers.

Phonology

Phonological analysis is indeterminate in at least three ways, vis-à-vis orthography. First, phonology is a collection of theories evolving over time, and the study of tone systems is still in its infancy, and the community of tone scholars is very small. There are no recent textbooks devoted to tone, even though the textbooks on phonology and on intonation number in the dozens. To the extent that phonology is viewed as a technology for creating writing systems, it is not a particularly stable or reliable technology. Second, the phonological studies that typically support a new orthography are often superficial, in terms of empirical coverage, level of analysis, and attention to morphology, and so their findings must necessarily be regarded as tentative. Third, while the application of phonemics to writing systems (Pike 1947) is relatively well understood, the suitability of this approach for writing tone is poorly understood. Recent experimental evidence supports this claim (Bird 1999d). Given this threefold indeterminacy, it seems reasonable to expect that a strictly phonological approach ought to permit some latitude with an orthography.

Reading

The last twenty-five years has seen a burgeoning interest in the reading process and in psycholinguistic experiments that shed light on the process (Singer and Ruddell 1985; Frost and Katz 1992). There has been limited cross-linguistic study of the reading process (e.g., Frost et al. 1987), and this work clearly needs to be expanded in order to inform ongoing work on

the creation and revision of orthographies. For a discussion of the "orthographic depth hypothesis" in relation to tone marking, see (Bird 1999c).

Evaluation

Many of the tests that have been used to evaluate readers and to compare the success of different pedagogies can be applied to multiple candidate orthographies. My experiment on Dschang showed that readers of one tone language are generally more fluent when the tone marks are left out (Bird 1999d). Bill Bright (pers. comm. 1999) reported the case of Southern Ute (Colorado) where the orthography created by the linguist was heavily laden with diacritics and the speakers of the language eventually gave up trying to master it. One wonders just how many other orthographies there are which subject readers to "diacritic overload". Rigorous testing of new orthographies is an excellent way to check for such problems and to iron out any other wrinkles.

Standardization

For reasons of efficiency and impact, expatriate linguists regularly attach a higher value to standardization than is typical of the cultures in which they are immersed. While it has a useful function, "standardization should not be punitive" (Bright, pers. comm. 1997). Equally, disagreements between different communities concerning details of an orthography do not necessarily have to be viewed as conflicts which must be resolved before progress can continue (contra Hornberger 1995).

Pedagogy

The existence of difficulties in learning to read and write tone is sometimes blamed on the orthography. In some cases, however, the pedagogy also causes problems. I have pointed out elsewhere that the teaching of tone orthography in Dschang focuses exclusively on words in isolation, but it is tone marks on words in phrasal context which causes most problems (Bird 1999d). Just as L1 problems are not the sole responsibility of the orthography, L2 issues may also be better dealt with by pedagogical rather than orthographical solutions. For example, Kotey (1995) describes a "proficiency oriented strategy" which avoids the problems arising out of the "lexical tone preoccupation", which is engendered by more traditional L2 learning methods. The expatriate linguist learning an indigenous tone language at the same time as designing an orthography for the language must be at pains to improve L2 self-pedagogy in preference to skewing the orthography.

Ethnography

The development of writing systems takes place "within the total realm of intergenerational ethnic identity and continuity" (Fishman 1988:273). It connects to a network of readers, writers, and texts that has been called the "discourse community" (Rafoth 1988). And the multilinguistic situation adds significant complexity to the task faced by writers (Fraser 1986:321). Schieffelin and Charlier Doucet (1992:427) argue that "contested orthographies be viewed as sites of contested identities rather than as neutral academic or linguistic arguments without political, social, or educational consequences." Those who work on orthography design or revision need to analyze the role and the needs of the different special interest groups who have an interest in the orthography, whether local language development committees, professional linguists working for the government or a national university, resident expatriate linguists, and the speakers of the language themselves (Hornberger 1995). A useful set of methodologies is provided by research in ethnography of communication, a field which focuses on "the patterning of communicative behavior as it constitutes one of the systems of culture, as it functions within the holistic context of culture, and as it relates to patterns in other cultural systems" (Saville-Troike 1996:351). Since Basso wrote his plea in 1974, some ethnographies of writing have been developed (Heath 1983). This understanding of ethnographic issues provides a broader cultural awareness that is a prerequisite for field linguistics (Samarin 1967, §2).

Development

Nowadays, the introduction of new writing systems usually takes place in relatively small and isolated communities as the result of outside involvement (cf. Fishman 1988:274). In this context, literacy is closely associated with development. (Bamgboṣe (1991:38ff) has reviewed literacy and development across sub-Saharan Africa.) Literacy presupposes the existence of a writing system, and formal orthography design often takes place in this context. A new orthography should not present unnecessary obstacles to the learner who may have severely limited access to basic pedagogical resources. A new or revised orthography, and the associated pedagogy, should maximally facilitate the widespread acquisition of literacy. Orthography creation and revision are special cases of "development intervention" and can be viewed in the context of empowerment. In particular, the ethnographic methodologies employed by Robinson (1996) and his "dynamic communication-centered development process" (p. 262) should be adapted to orthography.

Policy

Given the administrative arrangements by which expatriate linguists are permitted to be present in the country, they are typically well aware of the de jure language policy but often naive about the de facto language policy of the country (cf. Schiffman 1996). The official policy (if there is a policy at all) may be for full bilingualism in the mother tongue and a language of wider communication, but the unwritten policy may be for a complex diglossia between indigenous languages and official languages. Furthermore, as alluded to above, expatriate linguists may have the technological capability, which makes them the primary implementers of official policy. Understanding the de facto policy, at both macro and micro levels, is critical to an understanding of the space of orthographic possibilities in a given situation.

Change

Both acceptance and rejection of orthographic change are sociopolitical statements (Fishman 1988:277). A completely orthogonal perspective from which to view orthographic innovation is that provided by the literature on "change" (e.g., Douglas 1997). An outside linguist who wants to introduce change needs to understand the accepted change agents in the society and what kind of leadership achieves consensus rather than division. Various groups may compete for authority: speakers of the language who cite their fluency in the language; national linguists who cite their scholarship of the language; expatriate linguists who cite their external training; the speakers themselves (Hornberger 1995:197, 203).

This call to deeper and broader understanding is a daunting challenge. A simpler way out is afforded by the following "linguists' gambit": "We can no longer dictate orthography, but let's continue to hand down orthographies and let the best one win." A version of this approach was described by Bill Bright at the panel session, "Orthography and the Politics of Identity Construction" at the 96th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association (Washington, D.C., November 1997): "Linguists should not impose solutions. The users of the orthography should be free to do what they want without having a linguist nagging them. The best system will win over time."

I believe this position excuses orthographers from dealing with the difficult questions whose answers demand understanding of the range of issues described above. It is a "live and let live" philosophy, whereby the sanguine linguist gets to continue to work in a vacuum, handing down idealized orthographies, while agreeing to let everyone else work out the practical details without further interference. I agree with Gregersen, who wrote the

following in connection with his discussion of two orthographies for Hausa.

> How shall we evaluate the successes and failures of these systems? Unfortunately, a great deal of relevant information is lacking. We have no accurate data on literacy, on the time required to learn the different systems, or on the relative ease in reading the two orthographies. Of course we might simply wait and see, applying a kind of linguistic Darwinism and labeling that system as successful as that which survives. In so doing we could perhaps further argue that good orthographies drive out the bad, with the operationally impeccable implication that what we are left with is the good. But few scholars would long brook such foolishness.... (Gregersen 1977:426)

If we are to learn anything from the history of orthographic innovation in Cameroon, it is that the enduring ideas were those which took account of the sociolinguistic and political realities, and the various layers of identity referenced by orthography, leveraging them in order to achieve the desired change. The result was not always a good orthography, particularly in the area of tone where under-representation and over-representation may well be major obstacles for the acquisition of reading fluency. The challenge is to manage the nonlinguistic constraints while achieving beneficial change.

Finally, linguists must recognize the limitations of their craft and be prepared to relinquish their identity as the sole professionals involved in orthographic decisions. The task is to facilitate and enable the users of the orthography. This, the linguist must see as the primary objective, even when it entails a loss of identity.

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Literacy Evaluation Tool

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1. Purpose statement

The purpose of the Literacy Evaluation Tool (LET)[1] is to evaluate the effectiveness of vernacular literacy programs in order to show what areas may need improvement. The goal is to produce fluent literates with good word attack skills who can write creatively and spell accurately (involves the four basic elements, see READ 28.2:18). This tool can evaluate any method, and it can also determine if teacher skills are adequate. There is a school facilities evaluation example as well.

Other factors such as infrastructure, community support, supervisory training and performance, program continuity, material shortage, and subjects other than reading and writing fall outside the scope of this evaluation tool. These factors should be considered, though, and changes made if their influence is hindering the program's effectiveness.

The next section gives a summary of the approach, and subsequent sections fill in the details.

2. Summary of how to use the LET

The supervisor and/or literacy program advisor should do the following.

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[1]This tool was designed specifically for use by SIL and National Bible Translation Organization literacy workers and possibly for use by very experienced local national literacy supervisors. It is also assumed that the four basic elements were considered in the development of the materials and method to be evaluated and that balanced literates are the desired outcome. Much of the material and the model for this tool came from original research work done by R. Rempel and is written up in an unpublished manuscript entitled, "Research Proposal" and dated 20 December, 1994. The manuscript is on file with the author.

Before use:

1. Customize or tailor the Teacher Evaluation (see page 46) and the Mid-Year Student Evaluation forms (see page 50) but keep the tests fairly short.
2. Make enough copies of the Student Evaluation form for each class and make a copy of the Teacher Evaluation form for each teacher.
3. Prepare two to four sets of testing materials. Only test with materials that the students were taught in one of the previous weeks (except for the unfamiliar story in the End-of-Year Evaluation).
4. Develop reading standards (End-of-Year only, see page 40).
5. Inform teachers of the date of evaluation. The first evaluation is not until midway through the program. This is to allow the teachers to settle into a routine of teaching and become confident in their roles and to give the students time to learn the materials and be comfortable in school.

General guidelines for use: two times a year (a local supervisor should be the one doing the evaluation if possible).

1. Evaluate teachers and facilities: observe every part of the literacy method (whether that takes one day or one week per class).
2. Give students a practice test as a group, so they will be familiar with the procedures.
3. Evaluate students using the appropriate evaluation form and the sets of materials not used in the practice test. Different material could be used during the evaluation, so that the tested students cannot inform the next students.
4. Graph the results of the Student Evaluation. This shows the average results of the whole class, which will shed light on the strengths and weaknesses of the method and/or teachers and their training.
5. Consider results and comments on Teacher and Facility Evaluation.
6. Interpret above results.
7. Make changes and/or decisions.

Testing procedures: On a midweek day (Tuesday or Wednesday is best if possible), individually test each student in a quiet but familiar place. Have the teachers monitor other students outside of the classroom and bring them one at a time for testing. Always leave the students with encouraging words regardless of how they did, because the evaluation is focusing on the literacy method more than individual student progress.

3. Doing the Mid-Year Evaluation

Timing: midway through the program.

Which forms: use the Teacher and Facility Evaluation form and Mid-Year Student Evaluation forms for the mid-year evaluation.

General: The purpose of the mid-year evaluation is to determine if your method is producing students in the emerging-literate zone. These forms are all method specific and so must be customized or tailored to suit the method.

How to customize the forms:

- **Teacher Evaluation forms:** Make a checklist of all the teaching activities of your method (see Sample Teacher Evaluation, page 46).
- **Mid-Year Student Evaluation forms** (see page 50): Decide from the suggestions listed below which activities from your method should go into each of the areas. Write these activities in the proper places on the form. Under "Reading Wholes Fluently", be sure to include one comprehension activity. It is suggested that you choose no more than three activities for each area to keep the testing time short. (Note: under "Writing a Story" there is only one activity.) Following are samples to choose from.

Reading Wholes Fluently	Reading Parts Accurately
• Find matching words in a text (give students five words on flash cards). • Find and read five sight words from a text. • Read a current short story aloud. • After being read a short story, retell the story in its proper sequence (tests comprehension). • Answer comprehension (detail) questions from a story read. • Predict what word goes in the blank of a sentence (tests comprehension).	• From the primer, break down a recent keyword into parts. • Read five recent keywords from the primer. • Say sounds of five known letters written on a piece of paper or a slate. • Read five known syllables written on a piece of paper or a slate. • From a phoneme or syllable grid, blend sounds/syllables into five words of the student's choice. • Read five familiar new/built words from the primer.

Writing Parts Accurately (as dictated)	Writing a Story
• Write name. • Write correct letter formations. • Write five known letters/syllables. • Write the current keyword. • Write five recent keywords. • Write three familiar words made up of all introduced or known parts/letters.	• Write a story on a theme/topic, draw a picture, and read the story out loud while pointing to the story (accurate spelling could be noted and an extra bonus point given).

Preparing materials: From lessons already taught, choose which sounds, syllables, words, and stories you will use in the evaluation. Prepare three different sets of materials: one for group practice and two for evaluation activities.

Giving the evaluation: Use the materials from your method for the reading evaluation. Score each activity as the student performs it. For the writing parts, have pencils and paper or slates and chalk ready for the students to write on. Score each activity as the student performs it. Have students write a story as the last activity. Give the student something to write with and something to write on, and then ask him to draw a picture and write a creative story about _____ (choose a theme/topic). Send him to another part of the room and give him as much time as he needs. Meanwhile, begin evaluating the next student. When the storywriter is done and when the evaluator is between students, he can call the story-writing student over and listen to him read his story and mark his score on the evaluation form.

3.1 How to score and graph the Mid-Year Evaluation

3.1.1 How to score each student

Five-point scoring system for testing students:

5: perfect performance; no mistakes

4: quite good; few mistakes

3: "so - so"; OK; stumbled through with quite a few mistakes

2: not good; very many mistakes

1: not able to do or say anything; nothing

Write down the student's name on the form, and then score that student for each activity using the five-point scoring system. Scoring the Writing a Story section is probably the most subjective activity to score. Perhaps it would help if you gave a point for every phrase or coherent word written, plus an extra point for good spelling. After all the students in one class have been evaluated, fill in their ages (guess if necessary) and attendance from other school records. Average[2] the scores of all the students in the class so that there is one number between one and five at the bottom of each column.

Use the "Comments" section at the bottom of each evaluation to note things such as improper eye/head movements when the students read, general student nervousness or frustration during the evaluation sessions, and any other observations that might have affected the evaluation scores for individual students or the class as a whole. Also look for patterns in the mistakes being made such as vowels, word initial, or word final.

3.1.2 Averaging class scores

When averaging class scores, do not include students who are out of the norm, for example, those who are extremely young or old (under six or over forty-five), those with more (previous) schooling than most, those who have low attendance records, those speaking another dialect or language as their first language, or those with obvious visual, hearing, or mental handicaps.

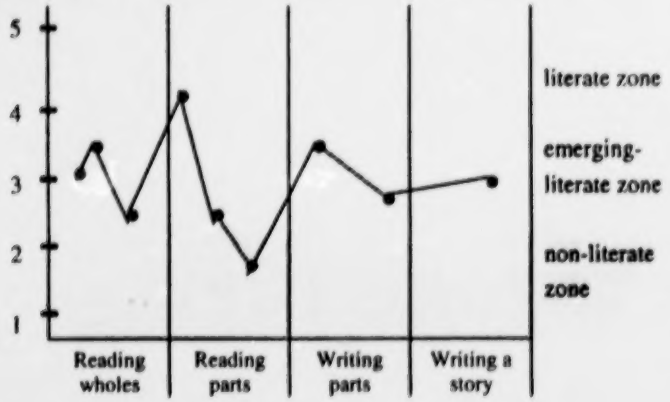
3.1.3 Graphing class scores

A graph is an easy way to see the scores of the class as a whole (see sample following). This graph is designed to show average class scores, not individual scores.

[2] To average, simply add up the total scores of the students and then divide by the number of students being evaluated.

Name of school:_____ Term: _____

Number of hours taught:_____ Year: _____



3.2 Interpretation of mid-year results

Average scores for each class should be in the emerging-literate zone (around "3") for the Mid-year Evaluation. If average class scores are low, it is suggested that changes be made only in the areas of teacher skills or pace of teaching. Perhaps the following specifics will be helpful things to consider changing.

- The teachers need more experience and/or training (via in-service or on-the-job training).
- The teachers should spend more time on each lesson before moving on to the next lesson, in other words, teach at a slower pace.
- The teachers should redistribute time spent, giving more attention to teaching activities in the low scoring areas.

Assume for the time being that your method will work if the above areas are improved. However, if there are **obvious** areas of weakness in the method, which can be strengthened, or things that should be added, do make improvements in the method at this point.

4. Doing the End-of-Year Evaluation

Timing: The End-of-Year Student Evaluations should be given after approximately the following amount of schooling.

Ages 6–10, 35+	Ages 11–35
• 9 months	• 6 months
• 32–40 weeks	• 25 weeks
• 160–200 days	• 125 days
• 640–800 hours	• 500 hours

Which forms: Use the Teacher and Facility Evaluation (same as the mid-year one) and the End-of-Year Student Evaluation.

General: The End-of-Year Student Evaluation is general in nature and is the same for all programs, regardless of what method has been used. It should not be changed from the sample given. **The purpose is to determine if the students have become literate or not. If the students do not test out as literate, then quite likely the method or other program factors are in need of improvement.**

Preparing materials: For the writing tests, pencils and one sheet of blank [lined] paper per student needs to be prepared and available. For the reading tests, two kinds of short stories or texts need to be prepared beforehand and a **standard** needs to be developed for these two types of stories.

One story needs to be **familiar** to the students. This could be taken from one of their primer stories, Big Book stories, or experience stories learned perhaps three-fourths or four-fifths of the way through the program. The other story should be a cultural but **unfamiliar** text the students have never seen. Both stories should be fairly short but be a complete story, i.e., no longer than four or five sentences and written on a fresh sheet of paper in neat print or typed with no smaller than size fourteen font. One picture could accompany each story if desired.

Developing reading standards: In order to develop a **standard** of fluency and accuracy, it is suggested that one of the teachers be tested. Ask the teacher to read the **familiar** story **only once,** and time him in minutes and seconds to see how long it takes. (If the teacher starts reading the story and then starts over at the beginning halfway through, keep the clock running. The time should be started when the teacher begins reading the story and go until he finishes the story.) This time, give or take a small range, would be the standard for attaining a "5". Multiplying the teacher's time by two would be the standard for attaining a "3". Multiplying the teacher's time by four would be the standard time for attaining a "1". For example if teacher Jon reads the familiar story in thirty seconds, the standard would look something like this:

score	time range	timing without a watch
5	0:40 or faster	fast (teacher's pace)
4	0:41–0:59	
3	1:00–1:30	medium
2	1:31–1:59	
1	2:00 or slower	slow

In order to develop a rating standard, ask the teacher to read the **unfamiliar** story out loud **only once** (it should be unfamiliar to him too), and mark/count how many mistakes he makes which he does not go back and correct. If a mistake is corrected, then it does not count as a mistake. A mistake is defined as (1) reading/saying the wrong word or the wrong variation of the word, (2) adding a word not in the story, or (3) leaving a word out which is in the story. Allowing the teacher to silently read the story before reading it out loud is acceptable also. If you allow the teacher to silently read before reading out loud, you should also give the students this option when they are being tested on this activity.

> Lama went to his home and got his bow and arrows. Then he went with his friends to the bush to hunt pig. After hunting all day, the group finally cornered and shot a big black male cassowary. Lama carried it back to the village, and they all enjoyed a delicious dinner.

For example, when teacher Jon reads the unfamiliar story (above), he reads "house" for "home" and does not correct himself. He also left out the word "male". Even though the story still makes perfect sense, Jon made two mistakes that he did not correct. So two or less mistakes becomes the standard for attaining a "5". Multiply the number of mistakes the teacher made by two and that becomes the standard for "4". Multiply that number by three to get the standard for "3" and so on (if the teacher does not make any mistakes, use the number 1).

Since the teacher made two mistakes the standard would look like this:

mistakes	score
0-2	5
3-4	4
5-6	3
7-8	2
9+	1

If the teacher does not make any mistakes the standard would look like this:

mistakes	score
0	5
1	4
2	3
3	2
4+	1

It is suggested that three or four sets of materials be prepared in advance, so group practice runs can be done for the purpose of familiarizing students with the testing procedure and activities. Also, different stories can be used with half of the class should the students who have already taken the test tell the other students what the stories are about. Standards need to be set for each story since some texts might be more difficult than others. Setting standards like this will help to account for text difficulty.

4.1 Giving and scoring the End-of-Year Evaluation

To get the score for the "Reading Wholes Fluently" section, time the student on how long it takes him to read the familiar story out loud. Mark the student's time (the number score of one to five can be put in later or on the spot, whichever is easiest), and then ask three comprehension questions: (1) "What was the story about?"; (2) a detail question, such as, "Who shot the cassowary?"; and (3) a second detail question, such as, "Who carried the bird home?" The first question is a main idea or retelling question that is worth three points depending on how much information or detail the student gives. Each detail question is worth one point if answered correctly. **The student is allowed to re-read the story silently in order to find answers to the questions. The supervisor/evaluator should tell the student this.** Put the points earned in the "comp" column. Averages can be figured later.

To get the score for the "Reading Parts Accurately" section, have the student read the unfamiliar story and mark how many mistakes he makes which he does not correct without prompting. Prompting should be done only for very poor readers. Put the number of mistakes or the actual score determined from the standard in the right box, and then ask the same three types of comprehension questions about the story. Because comprehension and meaning is the main goal for this part of the evaluation, **students may re-read the story to find answers if they want or need to.** Averages can be figured later.

Getting the scores for the "Writing Accurately" and "Writing a Story" sections is done by scoring just one activity in two different ways. Do this activity last. Give the student a piece of paper and a pencil (a desk, lap board, or book will also be needed to write on), and ask him to print his name, draw a picture, and write a creative story about _____ (choose a theme/topic). Make sure the student's name is written clearly, and then send him to another place or part of the room and give him as much time as he needs. When he is done, one of the teachers can collect the stories and pencils, make sure the student's name is correct, and then these can be scored later by the supervisor. Meanwhile, reading tests can continue.

To get the score for the "Writing Parts Accurately" section, check for accuracy in spelling, capitalization, and letter formation/neatness. A word is wrong if (1) it has capital letters where small letters should be, (2) if it is hard to tell what the letters are, or (3) if it is spelled incorrectly. To score, start with a score of "5", and subtract one point for every two words that are misspelled, or subtract one-half point for every word that is incorrect. For example, if a student has three incorrect words, his score would be "3.5". The lowest score any student should be given is "1".

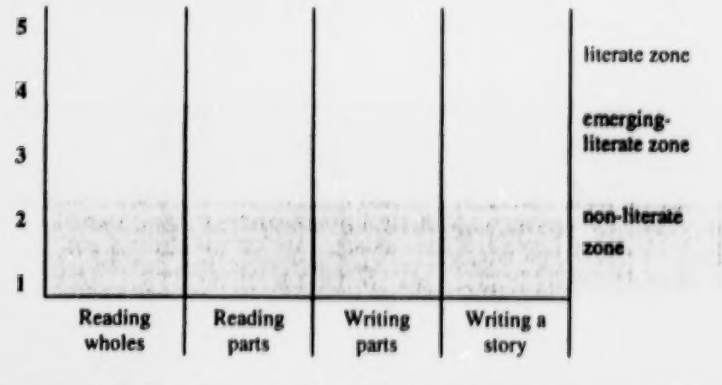
To come up with the score for "Writing a Story," give one point for every **meaningful** phrase or sentence but not more than five points total. The story must be a story, not just a string of words. For example, if a student wrote a sensible story four "bits" long, he would get a score of "4". If he wrote a sensible story eight "bits" long, he would get a score of "5". If he wrote a story with only two meaningful "bits" along with other unrelated words, he would get a score of "2". Try to also give credit for quality writing in such things as expressing feeling. In other words, this section gives credit for creativity, making sense, and length.

4.1.1 Graphing the scores

Average the class scores so that there is one number between 1 and 5 at the bottom of each section of the evaluation, then graph the class profile scores on an End-of-Year graph like the example shown on the following page.

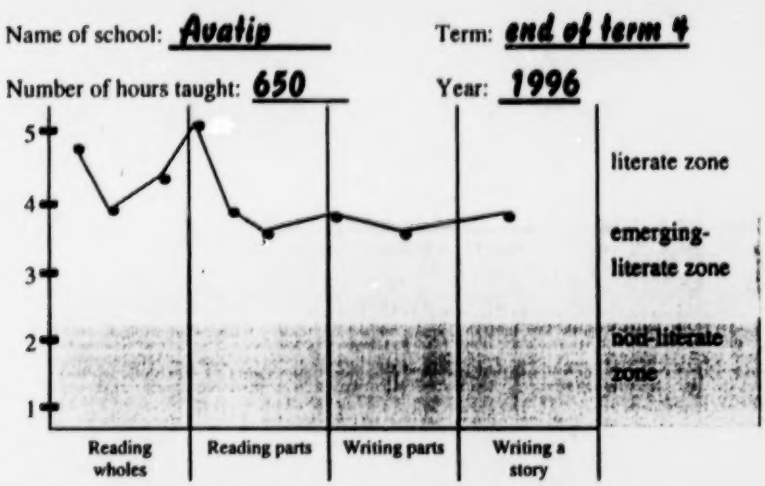
Name of school: _____ Term: _____

Number of hours taught : _____ Year: _____



The example below shows a graph, which shows the average scores of one village class:

BEST C



4.1.2 Interpreting End-of-Year results and making changes

Standard scores for a class at the end of the year should be in the literate zone. Average scores lower than "4" may indicate the need for improvement in the method.

Individuals: If the majority of the class scores in the literate zone ("4" or above), then individual students who did not attain literateness should probably repeat the class. If the majority of the class did not score in the literate zone, then there is probably room for improvement in the program and/or method. All factors should be considered. If most of the students got scores in the emerging-literate zone, then they could either: (a) all repeat the class without any new students coming in, (b) all go through the materials again as a class only faster, or (c) send the highest scoring students on to the next class and have the lower scoring students repeat with new students and an improved program.

Method: If average student scores are in the literate zone and all the scores have improved (student, teacher, and facility), then you have been successful! Congratulations! No need to make changes.

If student scores have improved but not equally across the four elements, consider strengthening the teaching in the areas where scores are low. For example, if the scores for Reading Parts (word attack skills) are low, perhaps more time needs to be spent on training teachers in how to teach word building skills, or more time in the class needs to be spent on word building activities, or more materials need to be developed for this area.

OPY AVAILABLE

If the Teacher and Facility Evaluations have improved, but student scores are not in the literate zone, improve your method paying special attention to strengthening low score areas. Improvement does not necessarily mean more materials or more learning activities, but it may mean a more simplified program so teachers can teach fewer materials and do it better. Or, improvement may mean concentrating or focusing on teaching in areas needing skill development.

If the Teacher and Facility Evaluations have not improved, improve teacher training in quality or amount of. Also, continue to encourage communities to improve the facilities.

Sample Teacher Evaluation

Mid-Year and End-of-Year

TEACHER EVALUATION

Fill out one list for each teacher and one for each school.

Date of visit: _____ Language: _____

Name/location of school: _____

Type of school: _____

Name of evaluator: _____

Weeks/days/hours of school finished: _____

Teacher's name:_____ Sex:_____ Approximate age:_____

Formal education level:_____ Vernacular literacy training:_____

Weeks / days / hours taught: _____

Tick the appropriate box:

Consistent attendance:	_____needs improvement	_____satisfactory	_____total days
Class control:	_____needs improvement	_____satisfactory	_____excellent
Rapport with students:	_____needs improvement	_____satisfactory	_____excellent
Teaches thoroughly:	_____needs improvement	_____satisfactory	_____excellent

Comments:_____

_____

_____

Observe each teacher teach all the parts of the method and check boxes below:

Check/tick the box for satisfactory. Leave the box blank if not satisfactory and note how this area should be improved. (The listed parts/teaching activities below are only samples. Customize according to your method.)

- ☐ read Big Book story using "Reading steps"
- ☐ ask questions about story
- ☐ experience story on the theme/keyword
- ☐ flash card sight word games
- ☐ creative writing
- ☐ play/exercise break
- ☐ keyword discussion
- ☐ keyword breakdown to new letter
- ☐ drilling syllables/letters
- ☐ reading new words/sentences
- ☐ spelling practice

****The Supervisor should share strong and weak teaching skills with the teachers in private so the teachers can improve their teaching performance.**

Other questions for the supervisor:

1. Was the class meeting as scheduled?
   Yes No
2. Did you check the attendance log?
   Yes No
3. Did you observe the teacher teaching the entire lesson?
   Yes No
4. Did you discuss any problems observed with the teacher?
   Yes No
5. Were any problems satisfactorily resolved?
   Yes No
6. Did you check on any associated class activity such as an income-generating project?
   Yes No
   List any needs associated with that.

   _____
   _____

7. Did you do an inventory of classroom materials?
   Yes No
8. Did you provide the teacher with needed materials?
   Yes No
   What did you provide?

   _____
   _____

9. Did you check with members of the community (local literacy committee) to see if there are any problems with the teacher which need to be handled?
   Yes No
   If there is a problem, what course of action is needed?

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

Sample Facility Evaluation

Name/location of school: _____

Check/tick the box for satisfactory. Leave the box blank if not satisfactory and note how this area should be improved.

- school has good lighting
- teacher's blackboard is good quality and in a good location
- the teacher has a long pointer and uses it for blackboard reading
- students can easily see/use blackboard and materials
- two toilets (legal requirement)
- have office/storage space
- teaching materials and records are organized
- community supports the school
- classroom inventory of materials (indicate how much / how many copies are present and what sort of shape they are in or if they will need to be replaced / reprinted / repainted soon):
  - blackboard -
  - slates -
  - chalk -
  - pre-primers / Book 1 -
  - primer / Book 2 -
  - primer / Book 3 -
  - primer / Book 4 -
  - Big Books -
  - other reading books (list) -

SAMPLE MID-YEAR STUDENT EVALUATION

(customize and use mid-way through the year)

School:_____ **Language:**_____

Date:_____

Total hours/days/weeks taught:_____ **Teacher(s):**

General Information					**Reading wholes fluently**			**Reading parts accurately**			**Writing parts accurately**			**Writing a story**
Student's name and sex	Age	Total avg. score	Total days come	**Out of norm										
Add rows as needed in order to have enough space for all the students in a class.														
Total averages:														

** Check/tick the "out of norm" box if a student has had more schooling than the norm, has exceptionally low attendence, is extremely young or old, speaks another dialet or language as his/her first languge, or has visual and/or hearing loss. Do not average these students into the class average.

Comments:_____

Point system for testing students' literacy skills in the chart above:

5 = perfect performance: no mistakes

4 = quite good; few mistakes

3 = "so-so", OK; stumbled through with quite a few mistakes

2 = not good; very many mistakes

1 = not able to do or say anything; nothing

SAMPLE END-OF-YEAR STUDENT EVALUATION

(Use as is—do not customize except to add rows to give enough space for all the students)

Date: _____ **Teacher(s):** _____

Weeks/days/hours of school finished: _____

Name/type of school: _____

General information					**Reading wholes fluently**			**Reading Parts accurately**			**Writing parts**	**Writing a story**
Student's name and sex	**Age**	**Out of norm**	**Total days come**	**Total avg. score**	Read a familiar story; time* + comp ÷ 2 = **avg. score**			Read an unfamiliar story incorrect+ comp ÷ 2 = **avg. score**			Accuracy score	Creativity & sense score
					Time	**Comp**	**Avg. score**	**Incorrect**	**Comp**	**Avg. score**		
Add rows as needed.												
Averages:												

*Time can be scored as slow, middle, fast, or it can be timed with a watch.

Comments:_____

Possible acronyms for a tool useful in evaluating the successfulness of literacy programs: by Robin Rempel

(Designed especially for stimulating laughs)

Tokples Evaluation of Schools, Teachers & Students	**Helping to Enhance Literacy Programs & Systems**	**Literacy Evaluation Technique**	**Literacy Improvement Tool**
Literacy Improvement System for Tokples Schools	**Student & Method Evaluation for Literacy Schools**	**Tools for Evaluating Methods Programs Teachers & Students**	**Improving Tokples Systems thru' Evaluating Literacy Venues In Schools!!**
Enhancing Literacy thru' Evaluating Vernacular Activities in Tokples Education Systems	**Tools for Evaluating Students, Teachers ' and Enhancing Materials**	**OK, you think of one! ☺**	

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Please be sure the following instructions are followed when submitting an article for possible publication in *Notes on Literacy.*

1. **Submit articles in electronic format (either MAC or DOS), plus send a hard copy to the editor.** If you choose to send an article via e-mail, be sure it is in DOS format, as the editor's computer will not recognize MAC e-mail. A hard copy is needed, because some items do not translate well between computers, as many different computers and programs are used, so viewing the hard copy shows how the author intended the article to appear. Special characters, especially, can get lost.
2. **Include a brief biographical sketch.** This should include relevant training and degrees earned, dates of service, field(s) of service, and current title (e.g., literacy specialist, consultant, etc.).
3. **Be sure all direct quotes (anything in quotation marks) have the proper citation in the text where they occur.** This includes the author's last name, year of publication, and page number(s). Indirect quotes (material paraphrased without quotation marks) need to include the author's last name and year of publication.
4. **Include all pertinent information in bibliography.** This includes author's first and last names, year of publication, title of book or journal, and for journals and anthologies: article name, page numbers, volume and issue numbers.
5. **Be sure to include your current mailing address, as well as an e-mail address, if available.** Once an article is accepted and published, the author will receive a complimentary copy of the issue in which his or her article appears.

NOTES ON LITERACY

Volume 26, Number 3&4 **2000**

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Kenyang Literacy Program

Tanyi Eyong Mbuagbaw

Tanyi Eyong Mbuagbaw became a member of the Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy (CABTAL) in 1990, when he began working as a linguist and literacy specialist. Since May 1999, he has been serving as the Assistant Language Programs Coordinator and is a consultant-in-training.

1. Introduction

Each year, the government of Cameroon and UNESCO celebrate International Literacy Day on the eighth of September. It is usually a moment when the government, UNESCO, and other organizations such as SIL International-Cameroon Branch, The National Association for Cameroonian Language Committees, and The Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy (CABTAL) just to name a few, meet together to reflect on some of the burning issues concerning literacy in Cameroon.

This article describes how literacy activities have played a part in developing the Kenyang language spoken in Cameroon. Kenyang is spoken by more than 80,000 inhabitants living in Manyu and Meme Divisions in the South West Province, Republic of Cameroon. A large portion of the population also lives in urban areas in the country. The Kenyang language is made up of three main dialects: Upper Kenyang, Lower Kenyang, and Kitwii. Banyang mother-tongue speakers call themselves Banyangi or Manyang. About 65 percent of the population are literate in English. The younger population also studies French in primary and secondary schools and in institutions of higher learning, in accordance with government policy to promote official bilingualism. While the government has made steady progress in teaching English and French in the official school system at great expense, very little has been done to promote mother-tongue literacy in this country.

Since 1987, mother-tongue speakers started taking interest in the development of the Kenyang language. Notables in the communities, such as chiefs and elites, were contacted to support the development of the language. That same year, a language committee was created. To make sure

that all dialects were equally represented, the language committee included speakers of all three Kenyang dialects.

2. Sociolinguistic aspects

Two major problems face mother-tongue literacy in the Kenyang speaking area. First, there is the problem of language attitudes. Immediately after independence in 1960, the Cameroonian government instituted the policy of official bilingualism. French and English were the two official languages to be taught in schools. The government did not make room for the teaching of indigenous languages even at the informal level. French and English were encouraged through a program called *école sous l'arbre* (school beneath the tree) which was under the auspices of the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

With this gloomy picture concerning mother-tongue literacy in Cameroon, many Cameroonians did not see any reason to study their language, and Kenyang was no exception. So when literacy in Kenyang was introduced to a cross-section of the population, they responded with mixed feelings. Some said, "What future do I have in studying my language?" Others said, "I already know how to speak my language; I do not need anybody to teach me my language."

Without a serious commitment on the part of the government to promote mother-tongue literacy, it is difficult to motivate mother-tongue speakers towards becoming literate in indigenous languages. Most of the people who were motivated towards mother-tongue literacy were the elderly who studied during the German colonial period. At that time, the Germans instituted the teaching of indigenous languages in primary schools for three years. After that, it was the German language that was taught. In the British Cameroons, this policy continued, because the British government also accepted the teaching of indigenous languages. In the French-speaking area of the country, the French banned the teaching of indigenous languages. Coming with this background, it was difficult for the elite to accept the teaching of Kenyang so easily.

The second problem was that Kenyang has three dialects that are spoken in Manyu and Meme Divisions. Upper and Lower Kenyang are spoken in Manyu Division, while Kitwii is spoken in Meme Division. These dialects are mutually intelligible. No dialect was accepted as the standard dialect by the mother-tongue speakers. Everybody wanted his own dialect to be the standard reference dialect. This created a heated debate among mother-tongue speakers. Fortunately, Tyhurst and Tyhurst (1983) had written a document entitled *A Sociolinguistic Survey of Kenyang and Denya*. In 1989, a conference was held in which this document was presented. The

authors of this document were of the view that Lower Kenyang should be used as the standard reference dialect. Some of the points considered before Lower Kenyang was chosen as the standard dialect were as follows:

- number of speakers in each dialect,
- social prestige of the dialect,
- purity of dialect,
- degree of mutual intelligibility claimed by speakers,
- religious influence,
- good road access, and
- socioeconomic importance of the area where that dialect is spoken.

When these conditions were taken into consideration, Lower Kenyang was recommended as the standard dialect. This document was presented to the conference, and mother-tongue speakers accepted it because its proposals were in line with realities.

3. Functional aspect

The Kenyang orthography statement was published in 1990 immediately after the phonological analysis had been done. When the orthography statement was approved by the Linguistics Department of SIL Cameroon, an alphabet chart was produced that same year in order to show the literate population that the Kenyang alphabet was not like that of English. Many Kenyang elites who bought the alphabet chart were now faced with the daunting reality that the writing system of their language was different from that of English. Some doubted whether they would be able to read and write their language. When some of these problems were raised, a folk story book and a transitional primer were published between 1990 and 1991. The transitional primer helps those who already know how to read and write English to follow the various instructions to read and write Kenyang without much assistance from a literacy teacher. This transitional primer was a resounding success and many people started asking for classes for their children. In 1991, the language committee organized four teacher training seminars. Letters were sent to the villages requesting them to send villagers to be trained in reading and writing Kenyang. These teachers were in turn to act as facilitators in their villages. The folk story was published because, in Kenyang speaking villages, children gather around their parents in the evenings, and they tell them many folk stories. This book reawakened interest among mother-tongue speakers and brought to remembrance the days when many of them were children living in the villages.

A teacher training program was organized in June and July 1991, and fifty-five teachers were trained. After the teachers training seminar, many of the facilitators said that the fears they had about reading and writing Kenyang were over. Some even remarked that it was easier than English, because words were spelled as they were pronounced. The development of interest among mother-tongue speakers led to the production of more literature in the language.

A few years later, *Kenyang Primer I* (1996) was published in order to expand the literacy program in churches and primary schools. The primer follows the Gudschinsky method. The Gudschinsky method is an eclectic approach described in publications such as Gudschinsky (1973) and Barnwell (1979). It has a simple lesson plan that facilitates teacher training. Each lesson has a keyword related to a picture. A number of shell books (generic versions of desired pieces of literature rendered in a digital electronic format) have been translated and published in Kenyang. These books present health, agriculture, Bible stories, and various technical topics. *Primer II*, a post-primer, and a basic calculating book will soon be published.

The literacy program has extended to primary schools. Today, four thousand children are learning to read and write Kenyang in primary schools. The second phase will be to expand the adult literacy classes in churches and community halls. The adult classes and community centers will enlighten the people through functional literacy.

4. Organizational aspect

Literacy programs are very complex and require good organization, planning, and adequate finances. When the language committee was formed in 1987, it was named Society for Kenyang Literature (SKL). It was in charge of the affairs of the language. The executive officers of the language committee are made up of the chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, financial secretary, and the treasurer. A woman's representative was appointed.

Members of the language committee are elected every three years. As the language program was well organized, it is now primarily funded by the Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy (CABTAL). A project coordinator was appointed who was responsible for the affairs of CABTAL in the language. After the appointment of a project coordinator, and with the expansion of the literacy program in the rural areas, the Kenyang speaking area was divided into four zones each with a zonal committee and a zonal supervisor. CABTAL undertook the compensation of the zonal supervisors as assistance to the language committee, which could not raise funds to pay them. The reason for forming the zonal committees was to

oversee the work of literacy at the grassroots. Each zone was made up of ten to fifteen villages depending on the population of those villages. The zonal committee functions like the language committee. At the zonal level, the chiefs, members of the village traditional council, primary school teachers, and headmasters were elected. The zonal supervisor was also a member of this committee. Every three months, the project coordinator organized a meeting with the zonal supervisors. The zonal supervisors present their reports about literacy activities in their zones. These reports are put together and sent to CABTAL.

A number of subcommittees were created under the language committee. The translation subcommittee oversees the work of Bible translation. It is headed by a translator-exegete, who is a pastor seconded to CABTAL. He is in charge of Bible translation. The literacy subcommittee oversees the work of literacy in the field. Members of these subcommittees are also members of the SKL. There is also the technical committee, which is made up of notables and community leaders. They are in charge of all developmental aspects of the language. CABTAL is responsible for the compensation of translators, since its main objective is to give the Bible to the churches in the indigenous languages. All materials are first checked and approved by a consultant before they are published.

The teachers are mostly villagers who have completed primary school as a minimum requirement. They are properly trained in reading and writing and teaching Kenyang. Teachers' seminars are organized yearly to update the teachers and also to train new teachers who are coming into the literacy program. Compensation for the teachers has been left to the community. This has been very difficult since the inception of the literacy program. In a conference organized in 1989, it was agreed that each adult should pay 100frs CFA (fifteen U.S. cents) annually. Though the amount looks very small, it was expected to generate 4,000,000frs CFA (U.S.$9,000) annually. The community started supporting the literacy program towards this goal. In fact, the Kenyang community funded the first alphabet chart and the folk story book. However, from 1993, things started changing for the worse, as there were two salary cuts and a consequent devaluation in 1994. This brought much untold suffering nationwide, and many of the local people could not afford to contribute towards literacy. This also had an adverse effect on literacy teachers, since many of them had to resign in order to look for white-collar jobs in urban centers of the country. In order to remedy the situation, other methods were sought by the language and zonal committees. Annual gifts such as T-shirts, caps, and some financial donations were presented to the teachers. The language committee also advised the zonal committee to help teachers in clearing their farms from time to time as need be. The literacy teachers were also encouraged to sell literacy materials. The teacher made some profit for any literature sold.

As the economic situation started stabilizing in 1998, each parent who sent his child to primary school paid 300frs CFA (forty-five U.S. cents) annually to the headmasters. A third of the money is retained by the headmasters to pay Kenyang teachers, a third goes to the Parent and Teachers Association (PTA) which oversees the development of the various schools, and the remaining third goes to the zonal committee. During the last academic year, a total of 900,000frs CFA (U.S.$1,500) was collected from the various schools. As many schools and churches are joining the literacy program, contributions towards literacy are bound to increase. Further plans are made to generate funds internally. The project coordinator has been distributing orange seedlings to the villages to open "literacy farms". More than one thousand seedlings have been distributed to a few villages. It is expected that in the next few years, more than ten thousand orange seedlings will have been distributed. This is expected to raise about 20,000,000frs CFA (U.S.$35,000) annually in the next five to six years. The aim is that the Kenyang literacy program will become an independent, local, nongovernmental organization linking literacy and development.

5. Conclusion

Much progress has been made towards the enhancement of literacy and translation. From the beginning, headmasters in public schools did not support mother-tongue literacy. Kenyang was only taught in mission schools and community halls. These headmasters asked for official papers from the Divisional Delegate for Education before Kenyang could be included in the school curriculum. This took quite some time, since the government was not in favor of mother-tongue literacy. In 1997, however, a bill was passed in parliament approving the teaching of indigenous languages in schools. From that date, government schools have been accepting the teaching of Kenyang. Today, many headmasters are calling upon the language committee to organize training courses for their schools.

The elaboration of the Kenyang orthography guide, lexicon, primers, and many other materials for training teachers and writers has been useful not only for preparing literacy programs, but it has also stimulated further linguistic research. The Kenyang literacy program provided an excellent laboratory for testing the orthography in which the author of this article has worked as a consultant for almost a decade.

It is gratifying to see many Kenyang speakers learning to read and write their language. Today, there are forty teachers teaching approximately four thousand children in primary schools. This is expected to grow in the coming years. Literacy classes are also going on in churches and community halls, where many adults are becoming more and more interested.

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Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E): A Brief Overview

Ian Mowatt

Ian Mowatt and his family began work in Kenya in 1986 serving in a variety of roles: center manager for the Bible Translation and Literacy (BTL) center, technical services department manager, and literacy survey worker in the northwest of the country. In 1989, Ian returned to the UK where he completed a Masters Degree in Rural Social Development at the University of Reading. From 1991–95, he served as the community development advisor for BTL. In April 1995, Ian accepted an assignment to work at SIL UK in what is now known as International Programmes, where he is involved in networking and with his main areas of expertise being in project design and funding. In addition, he is the course coordinator and head of department for the Intercultural Communication and Training course run at Horsleys Green.

1. What is monitoring and evaluation?

For the efficient management of a language, literacy, or development project, it is necessary to know what progress is being made against the objectives of the project and whether the project is making a positive difference to the participants. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) ought not to be seen as a separate discrete activity but rather as being an integral part of the program. The process for measuring this, M&E, should start at the project planning stage and go beyond the expected life of the project.

1.1 Monitoring

Monitoring is the regular process of collecting and analyzing data used for project assessment and guidance. It also involves the setting of indicators of achievement or progress and the means of measurement of those indicators. It provides the data on which evaluation is based.

Common characteristics. There is need for continuity of monitoring activities, starting at the project planning stage and continuing through the implementation until the project ends. To form a baseline at the start of a project, there must be the collection of data, which will be used for measuring the progress of the project in achieving objectives and outputs.

Gaps in monitoring data could lead to difficulties for later evaluations or for decision making that relies on monitoring data. In addition to continuity, there must be a systematic approach whereby the monitoring process is carried out on a regular basis in terms of both timing and methodology.

Purpose. Monitoring provides timely, relevant, and useable data to address the following questions.

- Are project objectives being achieved?
- Are activities going according to schedule?
- Are there any problems surfacing?
- What strengths can be built upon?
- What are the weaknesses that need to be addressed?
- Is the impact of the project in accordance with the objectives?
- Is there any wastage of resources?

Additionally, it also provides records for long-term reviews, data for good planning, and data for public relations.

1.2 Evaluation

Evaluation is a retrospective assessment of performance against project objectives at a particular point in the life of the project or after the completion of the project. Evaluations take place in a field of tension as different stakeholders each have ideas as to the type of data required. It is important to recognize that this is the case and determine how the needs of each stakeholder could be best met. It may require considerable negotiation to reach an agreement as to what material is to be gathered for the evaluation.

Common characteristics. Evaluation is concerned with the analysis and interpretation of data. There is an element of judgment, often taken in a negative way. However, evaluation should be seen as fair assessment of what has occurred in the project without those involved feeling to be at fault. Part of the analysis should concern itself with issues of cause and effect. Evaluation can take place at one point in time (often retrospectively) or continuously; it addresses both time dimensions.

Purpose. Evaluation serves the role of identifying a project's strengths, weaknesses, and relevance to the beneficiaries, thereby enabling those responsible to make sound decisions. Critical and constructive analysis will help identify potential improvements of technical and staff performance. Evaluation is essential for finding out whether or not a project is having the desired effect on the beneficiaries. Linked to this is the assessment of sustainability. It ensures effective use of resources and accountability. Finally, evaluation provides input for future work, helping to formulate policy for future work.

1.3 Indicators

For any monitoring and evaluation, one needs a set of indicators based on basic criteria. However, indicators will be different for each project. For example, in a literacy project some of the indicators could be items such as number of learners, test and pass rates, number of teachers trained, commitment to education, openness to change, and teacher's performance.

1.4 Qualitative and quantitative data

Indicators can be quantitative or qualitative. For example, a project manager will need to know not only how many visits a worker has made, but also whether they were useful to the target group. Quantitative indicators are generally more familiar to users and straightforward to measure. Here, great care is needed to resist the temptation to collect vast amounts of unnecessary data. Qualitative indicators, however, are more difficult to deal with, because the concepts they address are less easy to pin down (e.g., commitment to education, openness to change, and teacher's performance).

Recognition of the relative strengths and weaknesses in quantitative and qualitative approaches to M&E work is important in deciding the most appropriate mix of methods or techniques to be used in any given instance.

1.5 Gathering the data

The choice of technique used in collecting the data will influence what is learned. For example, data on the numbers of teachers trained can be collected by written questionnaire but data on the performance of teachers cannot. Teacher's performance data can be collected by interviewing. The development of new tools or techniques must involve all potential users. The point is often made that it is not possible to produce a ready-made list of tools for a project, because each project is unique.

1.6 Processing the data

Traditionally, the stage of processing data in M&E work has been carried out either by a specific M&E unit, project managers, head office staff, or outside consultants. Participatory M&E, however, encapsulates the spirit of participation by attempting to include users at all levels in the data analysis. As with the general philosophy of participation, it aims for as wide an involvement of stakeholders as possible in order to produce a greater sense of ownership, responsibility, motivation, and, in the long term, sustainability.

1.7 Disseminating and using the data

Once data has been transformed into data of use to project stakeholders, the key is to pass on that data. The M&E process is not complete until the data

collected is actually used. This transfer of data should be a two-way process, i.e., from grassroots to funders and vice versa.

2. Problems and constraints

Establishing monitoring and evaluation is rarely a trouble-free process and a number of authors outline common difficulties, such as:

- over-ambitious design,
- inadequate staff training and availability,
- lack of resources,
- poor data quality,
- question mark over the legitimacy of qualitative data,
- missing or incomplete baseline survey,
- integration into project management,
- undocumented changes,
- avoidance of negative results, and
- timeliness.

3. External or internal evaluation

The issue of whether to use an external or internal evaluation methodology is widely discussed in the literature. While there tends to be agreement that monitoring should be an internal activity, the picture for evaluation is not so clear. The move towards participatory monitoring and evaluation implicitly entails a certain degree of internal involvement, however, this does not necessarily imply that an external evaluation has no value.

4. Training

In order to promote and sustain participation in M&E, local communities and project managers need support. As well as the desirability of having one trained person with a special interest in M&E to coordinate activities at project level, training for organization staff and local level participants is a vital element in effective M&E work.

5. Monitoring and evaluation of M&E

As with all activities undertaken as part of a development project, M&E should be subject to its own monitoring and evaluation process. One important M&E methodology, which deserves specific mention, is participatory

monitoring and evaluation. Narayan (1995) has identified a number of important issues to consider when adopting participatory monitoring and evaluation methods; these succinctly summarize much of what is recommended in this review as guidance for designing and implementing participatory M&E systems.

- Keep methods simple.
- Make a special effort to include women.
- Involve the users in analyzing the data. This makes a more effective base for other participatory activities.
- The accuracy and detail of information should be considered in the context of enabling users to understand new or action.
- Adopt the principle of "optimal ignorance", i.e., obtain only the required information.
- There is no formula. Learn what is suitable through experience.

When establishing participatory M&E, it is clear that the adoption of a systematic approach is essential. The series of steps widely advocated throughout much of the literature on this subject highlights the logical progression needed towards developing a complete system, so as to more effectively monitor and evaluate development activities, outcomes, and impact.

6. Summary

The importance of M&E in a literacy project was brought home to SIL UK and the Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy, and Bible Translation (GILLBT) when they applied to the Department for International Development (DFID) in the UK for funding. Our first submission included what we felt to be a significant element on M&E, however, the DFID asked for further clarification specifically on the qualitative indicators and the M&E process. Having to further clarify the M&E process and indicators had a positive influence on the planning and subsequent running of the project.

An effective M&E system will help show whether or not a project is making progress towards stated goals and objectives. By means of M&E, positive impacts and planned outcomes can be maximized and negative effects minimized. Thus, M&E should be an integral part of any project whether it is language, literacy, or development focused.

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Adaptation of the Multi-Strategy Method for the Far North of Cameroon

Susan Gravina

Susan has been working with the Mbuko in the Far North Province of Cameroon since 1996. She and her husband, Richard, are an SIL literacy /translation team. They launched the literacy program, with the aid of Dr. Mary Stringer, in 1998. Susan's aim was to set up a completely self-sustaining program with her services becoming redundant at as early a stage as possible. She is particularly excited about the possibility of independent propagation of the literacy program.

I was impressed with the Multi-Strategy Method devised by Dr. Mary Stringer and wished to apply it to the Mbuko project in which I work. However, the Far North of Cameroon has constraining factors, which inhibit the implementation of such a literacy program. These are certainly not peculiar to this area of the world, and so to help other teams who are faced with similar challenges, I have outlined the changes made to the Multi-Strategy Method that addressed these challenges.

1. Timetable versus limited time available

Dr. Stringer's program lasted for six months and consisted of two, hour-long lessons, five times a week. This was not a viable option for the Mbuko program, as the people in the rural Far North of Cameroon are farmers. They are only free to leave their fields during dry season and are not able to commit themselves to studying for five days every week. During this limited time, all the writers' workshops, teacher training, and refresher courses for existing teachers have to take place along with the reading classes themselves. Consequently, our literacy classes had to be tailored to fit into an academic year of no more than three months. So that these classes could still be completed in one academic year, our school week consisted of four days, each lasting for four hours. This intensive schedule did not pose a problem and yielded good results.

2. Teachers' required educational level versus general educational level

Less than 50 percent of the Mbuko population attend school, and of these pupils, less than half continue their studies after primary school level. Many do not even complete their primary school education. The need for a literacy program is self evident, but the staffing of such an enterprise poses problems.

The teachers' relatively low level of education meant that the Multi-Strategy Method had to be refined and honed down to its barest components in order to retain its efficacy. The story track schedule is fairly complicated and proved too difficult for most of the teachers to perform well. There were other hindrances, too. The importance of having a weekly theme and tying everything into that same theme was not appreciated, and the experiences were rather limited in their selection. In order to maximise the efficacy of this element of the course, the story track was ordered and a new teacher's guide was devised that cut out any unnecessary complications.

To order the story track, suitable themes were chosen and tied in existing material with these where possible. More stories were commissioned to cover the remaining themes. Listening stories were also commissioned so that the teachers no longer had to create their own.

Having a complete list of themes, big books, long 'stories, and listening stories, the author then worked on the experiences. Although only two experiences per theme were needed, four were given so that the teachers had a choice. These included games, "show and tell", drama sketches, and talks by guest speakers.

Finally, a new teachers' guide was created for the story track that included all this information. As the different classes would not necessarily adhere to the same term dates, the weeks were numbered. Giving a page to a week, the theme, the experience ideas for that week, and the titles of the relevant stories were listed. This guide was greeted with much enthusiasm by the teachers, who had taught the previous year without this resource, and made the training of new teachers inestimably simpler. The teachers' guides that Dr. Stringer includes in her book were also adapted and translated into Mbuko. In particular, a clearer timetable and explicit instructions for the teaching of long stories was given in the story track guide.

Another area of difficulty was the system of registration. The original system of two registers per class resulted in confusion and yielded no helpful data for research purposes. The Mbuko project uses only one register and does not update the list of students. In this way, their progress can be tracked.

With these revisions, the translated guides, and especially the new guide, the teachers' lack of education and experience was no longer a serious bar to their ability to teach well.

3. Financial

In this impoverished region, the per capita income is often insufficient to cover anything other than basic necessities. The pecuniary restrictions mean that it would not be practical to charge course fees. Our costs obviously had to be kept to a minimum and reliance on consumable items discouraged. With a modest initial outlay for materials and minimal running costs (made possible by teachers and supervisors working on a voluntary basis and churches that are already equipped with blackboards being used as venues for the classes), it was possible to offer these classes at no cost to the student.

4. Conclusion

The aim of the project has been to adapt the Multi-Strategy Method, so that the Mbuko can run it for the Mbuko and pass it on to whomsoever wishes to adopt it. After the introduction of the changes, the author was impressed by the existing teachers' ability to take on responsibility for training new teachers.

There are other language groups in this area that do not have a resident literacy specialist, and several groups have expressed an interest in a literacy program but do not have a language team working with them at all. With this simplified method, the teachers are more able to pass on their skills, and because the course is now so prescriptive, it can more easily be applied to other language groups who do not have a resident specialist. Where a workable orthography already exists, the program can be propagated without any expatriate help whatsoever.

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SALT '98:
A Short-Term Literacy Team in Cameroon

by Fiona Clayton, Jason Hunt,
Ulrike Hunt, and Alies Zandbergen

The following report has been written by various members of the SALT team. Author's names are listed for the sections that they wrote.

1. Introduction by Fiona Clayton and Ulrike Hunt

1.1 About SALT

SALT (Special Assignment Literacy Team) is a short-term program of SIL UK lasting two years including training, in which a team of between two to six people is sent to help with the literacy program of an existing project. Language teams request a SALT team, which is trained specifically for the project to which they will be going. So far, teams have worked in four different projects: Ghana (1995), Mali (1996), Burkina Faso (1997), and Cameroon (1998) with another planned for Cameroon for 2000-2002. The purpose of this article is to consider the conditions and factors necessary for a SALT team to be successful, to explain some of the work which we did as a team in Cameroon, and to inspire language teams to consider whether and how they may be able to use short-termers in their particular projects.

1.2 Salt '98: Cameroon in context

The fourth SALT team was invited to work in the Makaa project of East Cameroon. SIL first started work in this area in 1979, when Dan Heath and his wife, Teresa, began analyzing the language. In 1996, Nelis and Bianca van den Berg joined the project as literacy workers. There are about 80,000 Makaa speakers, and the interest in mother-tongue literacy is very low. The SALT team consisted of five people: Alies Zandbergen from Holland, Fiona Clayton from Scotland, and Matthew Heeley and Jason and Ulrike Hunt from England. Throughout our eighteen months in Cameroon, we worked on training local workers, producing publications, improving

teaching methods, encouraging post-literacy activities, and promoting the work of literacy and translation in the villages and churches.

1.3 Preconditions

Before the team arrived in Cameroon, there were some important factors already in place that enabled the SALT team to be successful.

The first was a dedicated leader in the form of Nelis van den Berg. Leading the team required him to change his role from literacy worker to supervisor of a team, to help us to plan, and to give us advice when necessary. This was a full time job, so he had to get his job satisfaction not from what he himself was doing, but from what he was enabling the team to get done. Janet Souster, the Mali team leader, underlined the importance of the role of the team leader for the success of the project in her article, "SALT: Reflections of a Team Leader" (*Read This! 7.2* June 1999).

Secondly, the project had to be ready to deal with the influx of workers. This meant that there had to be a sufficient number of local people already involved in the project with whom the team could work. Also, the project had already produced several publications in Makaa, including a transition primer, and a structure for transition literacy classes was already in place. The ground was well prepared for the extra manpower that was arriving.

1.4 Training and team building

We started in September 1998 in Horsleys Green, England. None of us had any previous experience with literacy work. Four of us had been teachers, and Matthew had just graduated from university. The training program included courses in phonetics, language learning, literacy methods, and team building. Nelis and Bianca van den Berg were present for part of this, which put the training into context for us. We were able to see and discuss how what we were learning would fit into the actual situation we were going to.

A vital part of the training was team building. The team members learned to understand their own and each other's character traits and preferences, to argue in a constructive way, and to work at projects together. Thus, we were more prepared to spend eighteen months living and working closely together.

In January 1999, we attended the Africa Orientation Course (AOC) in Yaounde, Cameroon, where we followed the normal AOC course except for doing the village phase in the Makaa area. We finally began work in the Makaa literacy project in April 1999. Although we had spent a lot of time in training, we felt it to be worthwhile, as we were able to start work in the project very quickly once we arrived on site.

1.5 Planning

Before we left for Cameroon, we had worked on a detailed plan of what we aimed to achieve in our short time there. Using the SPAR (Strategic Planning and Review) model, Nelis helped us identify aspects of the project we could work in to promote the literacy work. Each of us was responsible for one aspect. This did not mean we were working single-handedly on a particular aspect, rather that we were in charge of coordinating the activities and the mentoring and training of local people in this domain, as well as delegating jobs to other members of the team. For example, Jason was to be involved in book production, Alies was to evaluate the current teaching methods used, Ulrike was to be in charge of setting up a writer's workshop, Matthew was to work with pastors on Scripture-in-Use, and Fiona was to look into the production of ephemeral literature. The fact that we had already planned specific tasks was an additional factor enabling us to find our feet quickly when we arrived in the language area.

Of course this plan changed over the year as our roles became more defined and as we understood better the situation we were in. In later planning sessions we were able to involve local people, which proved to be vital for the continuation of project activities after our departure [see §5 "Planning as a mentoring exercise"].

1.6 Sustainability

The SALT program only allows the team to be in a language project for a fixed short period. This meant that the question, "What will happen when we leave?" was always being asked. Sustainability quickly became a buzzword! While it would be unrealistic to expect that after removing five full-time workers from the project everything would carry on as before, we tried to look at ways of making sure that as much as possible could continue after we left. Our emphasis, then, was on mobilizing and enabling the Makaa people to do the job themselves, so we spent considerable time training and mentoring people. This proved vital for the success of the work we were able to do. By the time we left, we felt that many of the activities we started had at least the potential to be carried on by local people. Time will tell if our hopes are realized.

1.7 Conclusion

All the SIL long-term staff in the Makaa area felt that the team had made a valuable contribution. New activities had been started, people had become a little more interested in the written form of their mother tongue, new areas had been reached, the churches were more ready and motivated to read the translated scriptures in Makaa, and the literacy project was taking on a more definite shape with the installation of regional supervisors and a literacy

office manned by local people. We had also been able to develop a number of contacts which the Heaths and the van den Bergs had started but had not been able to follow up for lack of time.

There were many factors then, which contributed to this. Training and planning were important, but this had to be in the context of a project that was ready for us. Having a team was good for the project, but without a dedicated team leader the team would have floundered. Team building sessions were an important part of training, but it was also the range of personalities on the team and grace that ensured that we were able to work well together until the end.

In the following sections, team members will describe in more detail the aspects of the work they were involved in.

2. **Literacy promotion** by Ulrike Hunt

2.1 Setting the scene

When the SALT team arrived in the Makaa area, a system of teaching people to read and write in literacy classes, led by local trained teachers, was already in existence. Yet, the community as a whole had still not accepted the value of mother-tongue literacy. Much needed to be done to popularize literacy in Makaa and to reinforce the sustainability of the literacy program. The problem was due to several factors including, not only the familiar one of new graduates from literacy classes failing to put their skills into practice, but also the lack of reading material in Makaa, lack of access to it, and lack of stimulation for the creation of new literature, apart from the overall problem of a low level of awareness in the community of the literature available. In order to address these problems, the SALT team adopted a number of strategies.

2.2 Village libraries

Borrowing the idea of the Mali SALT team, we set up village libraries, so that people could have access to books without having to spend much money. After careful reflection, we came up with a system: a copy of each publication was placed in a specially constructed metal box, painted bright red/yellow, and bearing the inscription, "Bibliothèque". The library started with about ten titles. Each book was covered with a plastic covering and stamped with the logo of the language committee. The library also contained a notebook, where the librarian was to note the details of who was borrowing which book. There was a limit of two weeks for borrowing books. A person who wanted to borrow a book had first of all to become member of the library. He would be required to pay the sum of 100 CFA

(the equivalent of ten pence (fifteen cents) or a liter of palm wine) and would then receive a membership card that entitled him to borrow books. For each book taken out, he would also have to leave a deposit of 200 CFA (the price of the book), which he would get back when he brought the book back in good condition. If the book came back damaged, the librarian had the right to retain a percentage of the deposit for the library, in order eventually to be able replace the book.

As new titles were published, these were added to the library inventory. By the time we left, publications available in the libraries covered a variety of topics: cultural (e.g., folk tales and proverbs), educational (e.g., about intestinal worms, basic safety rules when using pesticides, and soya beans), religious (e.g., the story of Ruth, parables, a Bible cartoon, The Gospel of Mark, and a hymnbook), as well as pedagogical (e.g., the Makaa/French dictionary).

Villages were encouraged to request a library, rather than our delivering one without consultation. We felt that this reduced the risk of library boxes sitting unused in someone's house. At the end of our year, there were six active libraries, which all had between six and ten regular readers. Books were still in fair condition, and the libraries were more or less autonomous.

2.3 Depots

To further address the problem of access to publications, we set up a depot system. We placed a depot box, designed by us, in three strategic villages with trusted individuals who were keen to promote the use of the written mother tongue. These boxes contained a few copies of each publication available, so that people could come to buy books more locally rather than have to travel to Abong Mbang every time. This also increased publicity for publications available.

The person in charge of the depot had to record in a book all the publications sold. He was in charge of the accounting of his depot and was responsible to us for the books that he sold. Every month he was to come to the Literacy Center with his notebook and the money, give an account of the books sold, and submit the money for the books. As a motivation, he was entitled to keep a percentage of certain publications. We would then replace the publications that he sold and keep track of his stock. The depots were also a useful point for the sale of ephemeral literature and T-shirts.

One depot worked very well. The man in charge was trustworthy and able to keep accounts accurately. He was also good at promoting the publications and sold plenty of books. One depot worked less well, largely due to the fact that it was in an area where there was very little interest in the project. Another depot worked fairly well in that the man in charge was good at keeping the records of his sales, but he did not often come into

town to settle accounts. We found then that for the system to work it needed good supervision. It also needed people in charge who were able to keep records and who were also good at promoting publications. The depot manager needed to be a person whom we knew well, saw regularly, and trusted. The success or failure of the depot system still remains to be seen, as it was set up only a few months before we left. However, we felt that in principle it was a good idea and that it has the potential to work well. Sales of publications did go up.

2.4 Reading and writing clubs

We felt that people were more likely to continue using their mother tongue in the written form if they enthused each other to do so. Thus we challenged villages to form a *Club de Lecture et d'Ecriture* (CLE). We encouraged people to form groups to meet for various literary activities, for example reading out loud together, writing their own stories, and reading and discussing these together. We emphasized that the members should run the club in the way that suited them best, so that the club was independent from us.

Three villages took up the challenge. One started to introduce literary activities within the framework of a working group that already existed. They wrote their own material and discussed it. They also organized the International Literacy Day on 8 September 1999; our only involvement was to invite them to do it and to provide money for food for the reception afterward. It was their village that hosted the Annual General Meeting of the language committee, and the club invited the entire community to a cultural evening of sketches and songs they had written.

Another village set up a club, but it was less active because many of the members were students and were not always around. However, seeing the other village in action has prompted the president of the club to action. He is fiercely competitive and wanted to do as well as the first village! In another village club, the members of a library were starting to get together informally for activities, again led by someone who was keen to see the written mother tongue used more and more. A week before we left, we helped open another club and library requested by a village where classes had only just started to happen. Obviously, we do not know yet how they are getting on.

Our overall impression is that the clubs, if they continue to work and take off in more villages, will be one of the keys that will ensure that people want to continue to use (and also become more interested in using) the mother tongue in written form.

2.5 Writers' workshop

Mother-tongue literacy is not really a felt need in the Makaa area. We realized that to interest people, we had to produce material that came from them, written by people they knew, and dealing with subjects that they recognized from their own everyday lives.

We wanted to encourage people to write their own texts and to be more proactive about developing their ability to write in their mother tongue. We wanted them to come to a point where the Makaa relied less on the outsider for new publications and began to write about what they themselves were interested in. We felt that people would be more interested in learning to read and write Makaa, if the available reading material came from their own community.

In September 1999 we held a writers' workshop, attended by the ten winners of a writing competition we had organized earlier in the year. In addition there were four people from a neighboring language group. The workshop went on for four days with lectures on how to make texts interesting using various basic techniques, such as descriptions, direct dialogue, and active verbs. We also talked about the importance of revising written work and reworking material to improve it. The afternoons were spent writing and rewriting.

The participants enjoyed the course, and each submitted one or two texts (after having had the chance to rework them at home). These texts were typed up, a local artist drew pictures to illustrate them, they were put together into a book, and then they were printed on a small scale. Each participant received a copy of the book, and one copy was put in each of the libraries.

We hoped that the participants would be motivated to continue to write of their own accord and to share their knowledge with others. Sadly we saw little evidence of this.

2.6 "Textes locaux"

To encourage people to write more, we felt that it was important for them to see the product of their efforts or at least for it to be rewarded in some way. We encouraged people to send in anything they wrote with the promise that we would type it up into A5 leaflet format, and they would receive one copy of it for themselves. The libraries would also get a copy. We hoped that in this way people would be proud to see something they had written in typed form.

We had several texts that people had written years earlier that were just sitting in a drawer. We typed these up and returned them to the authors as well as putting a copy in the libraries. The response of the authors was

enthusiastic: "I thought nothing was ever going to happen with these!" They obviously had not forgotten that they had written something, and it encouraged them to see it used.

There was the question of censorship, or at least of correction, of the language. Much of what people wrote was riddled with mistakes of punctuation, spelling, and grammar. We did not want, however, to undermine the little courage that there was to write or to make the writers feel inadequate. So, we decided to accept mistakes and print what people had written with the hope that this would encourage them to continue writing, and it would also promote discussion of spelling and such among the people themselves (which it often did!).

2.7 Conclusion

We tried many ideas to stimulate people to be more interested in learning to read and write their mother tongue and especially in continuing to use the written form of their language. The full impact of some of our ideas cannot be measured yet, as many of these initiatives are new. However, people were beginning to note more activity in relation to mother-tongue literacy, and they saw that it did not just end with passing a test at the end of a class. Moreover, the fact that we involved local people in nearly all of the activities described above gives us hope that interest will continue to grow over time as people are increasingly exposed to Makaa literacy in action.

3. Soccer and Scripture: Throwaway literature by Jason Hunt

Reading and writing for pleasure
Makes literacy part of your leisure.
You read it today
Then throw it way,
It's the skill and the process you treasure.
(Dr. C. D. W. Robinson)

3.1 Aim

In producing cheap, ephemeral, "throwaway" publications, we were seeking to improve the accessibility of Makaa literature to a wider public. We wanted to have documents that:

- could be given away by teachers and supervisors as examples when they were doing publicity work or encouraging potential students,
- could be bought for the same price as a cup of palm wine, and
- would attract new readers.

We had seen that a Makaa person, who was already literate in French, could learn to read Makaa by reading a publication that interested them. Effectively, therefore, these materials might enable someone to read Makaa.

3.2 Situation

There were already several Makaa titles available. These consisted of the standard first publications of Scripture, health, and folklore books. They were produced cheaply and subsidized but, in an environment where books were rare even among French-literate people, sales were poor. Although very worthy, this literature did look rather dull in comparison to the bright and colorful French posters and magazines that people commonly saw.

The principal way of learning to read and write Makaa was by following a course based on a transition primer. This involved a big time commitment and uptake was often poor. It also became apparent that those completing the course rarely wrote in Makaa. We worked on ways to encourage students to continue writing [see §2 "Literacy Promotion"], but we also accepted the fact that we need to have many readers before Makaa literature would ever take off. Writing would follow.

At the Makaa literacy office we had computers, a scanner, and a printer that we could use for producing good quality, attractive publications locally. This level of technology was becoming more common in Cameroon generally, and there were already three other offices in Abong Mbang offering computer services.

3.3 Producing ephemeral literature

We worked on a series of low cost, attractive, and varied publications: leaflets, posters, a calendar, church cards, and a football magazine.

3.3.1 Leaflets. Together with the literacy supervisors, we made many visits to villages to encourage people to enlist in Makaa classes. Take-up for classes would only be small, so another important aim of these meetings was to get as many people as possible to see Makaa in its written form. Therefore, we wanted to have small texts that we could get people to try to read out loud or that we could leave with them.

We realized that giving a book away free would leave the expectation that all books would be free, so we had to find something that could be seen to be "publicity material" and would be appropriate to distribute freely. So, we developed four-page, A6 leaflets (i.e., an A5 sheet folded in two), which contained a passage from a Makaa book with illustrations and details of where it could be bought. As advertising for a particular book, it was not successful. People were not keen to buy a book that they already owned part of! But as publicity material **and as a learning tool for reading**, it was wonderful. We chose texts that could make an attractive and

interesting leaflet and that worked as a "stand alone" text. We also produced an alphabet leaflet that we adapted from the Makaa alphabet poster.

Figure 1. A publicity leaflet. Caption: "Have you read *Makaa Folktales*?" The inside contains one of the traditional short stories from the *Makaa Folktales* book, and the back tells readers where the book can be bought or borrowed.

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3.3.2 Posters. During public relations visits for literacy classes, we noticed that the two posters of illustrated Scripture verses sold well. These were A3 paper posters produced cheaply at the SIL branch printshop. Even those who could not yet read Makaa bought these. Again they worked as a good learning tool, since people now wanted to read what they were putting up on their wall. The added bonus of posters is of course that they act as publicity materials themselves!

To add to the collection, we produced posters with the creed used in the Presbyterian Church and the Makaa translation of the Lord's Prayer. Both these texts were approved by the churches, and the posters were illustrated. A third new poster was produced from a scripture Shell book.

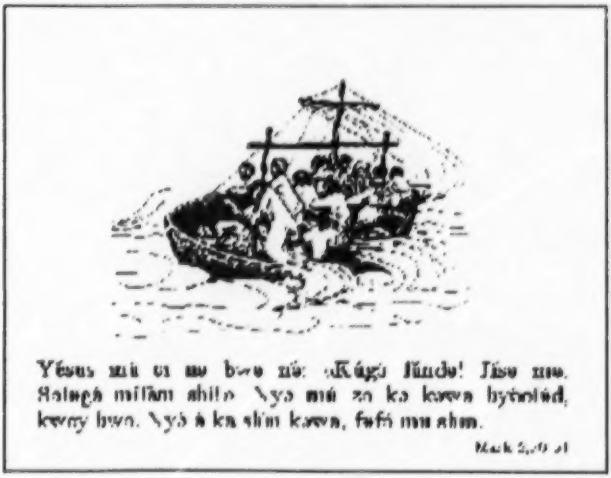

Figure 2. A poster. Caption: "A Makaa scripture poster." Inexpensive and good advertising!

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3.3.3 Calendar. We also made a calendar that was printed on an A3 card and had images and titles from all the Makaa books in print. In this form, it was suitable to give away to businesses and local authorities that would then display it in view of their public. As a literacy material, it broke the rules as it was crowded, had a mixture of French and Makaa, and had small text, yet it was a big seller as it was bright, bold, and cheap enough for people to want to put up in their homes and was another effective publicity tool.

Figure 3. A Calendar. Caption: "The Makaa 2000 calendar." A bit of a mess, but popular with both Makaa speakers and others!

3.3.4 Church cards. Seeing the success of the leaflets in the village setting, we realized that small cheap materials were excellent in making people aware of the idea of reading in Makaa. We needed something similar for churches where people were keen to develop the use of Makaa but found the Makaa scriptures rather daunting. We, therefore, produced small cards that people could carry in their Bibles. These contained the Lord's prayer and the creed, as well as, the name of the local church. Even though these cards might be tucked in French or Bulu Bibles, they still helped develop an awareness of and gave credibility to Makaa scripture.

A big scoop was the contract to produce the new church communion and membership cards. In the past the churches had bought these in the capital,

and they were in Bulu (a church language). The church was happy that we could produce them more cheaply, and people were proud to see that "official" documents were now in Makaa.

3.3.5 Football magazine. A major new publication was "Foot Mekaá", a short, cheap magazine about football in Makaa. The four-page A5 booklet contained articles on world stars and local matches. For the world stars, we drew on articles from French magazines that were summarized in Makaa, and we scanned some of the accompanying images into the computer. (When we wrote to a magazine to seek permission to use their images, they were very encouraging of our efforts—with the proviso that the publication was nonprofit making). Local news included national league teams from Abong Mbang and local village teams. The good quality photos and good Publisher[1] layout made the magazine stand out amongst the usual mother-tongue publications. It was available very cheaply, and it interested the younger men particularly. New readers had the motivation to work through it.

An initial problem was getting good text. At first, when the Makaa writers had read the magazine articles, they would produce a Makaa text that only contained the most basic information that people already knew from the radio. It took quite some training before the men started to identify the most interesting information and produce good Makaa texts. In fact, the latest editions changed in response to demands for more local news and images. Perhaps if the publication develops in the future, there will be no need to buy the French magazines.

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[1]We preferred to use Microsoft Publisher for our desktop publishing, because it was easier to teach to our Makaa colleagues than Pagemaker and used similar menus and icons to Microsoft Word.

Mawéeshé má shushwóógú
Foot Məkaá
Zá jisə ZINEDINE ZIDANE?
JOSEPH DESIRE JOB (Kamərun) ŋgwiimbye bal núní.
Məcwəmə má ígwiimbî sádí mákwáádá
No. 1 Août 1999 **
Prix: 50F CFA
Zá jisə ZINEDINE ZIDANE?
ZINEDINE ZIDANE nyə jisə mbiyə shishá ŋgwiimbye bal á məkuú. Miloom myésh mí mpú nyə. A jisə mwán mpál shí AFRIK, bwó dú jôw né ALZHERI. Nji, nyə a má sá məfáb né nyə músə mwán FULASHÍ.
Mbú á mpús, ZZ nyə á kə nə kib bal á loom FULASHÍ né ndéé kə yə bwə kúb á shí nyêsh.
ZZ jisə mwán á məzhugulâ. Nyə a tééd lélə bal a njúl nə mímbú 16. ...
ZZ bá Duŋgə (kíb á BREZIL)
ZZ mé ŋkęny kúb

Figure 4. Foot Makaa: A football magazine

3.4 Evaluation

As a team of SIL literacy workers, we had considerable resources to put into the development of new literature for the Makaa project. Since the traditional forms of publication were not captivating readers, we felt free to experiment. With the increased availability of computer equipment in towns such as Abong Mbang—and therefore its appropriate and sustainable use in such places—an increased variety of literature types was possible.

We realized that for Makaa literacy to become widespread, literature had to be more varied and more readily available. It was important, we felt, to get at least some Makaa into people's hands. The leaflets met that need. In producing the football magazine, posters, and church cards people were able to see just what the possibilities were for using Makaa. Since people were interested by these publications they could, to a certain extent, pick up how to read Makaa without having to follow the transition courses.

4. Applying Multi-Strategy and REFLECT in the context of a transition primer by Alies Zandbergen

Since 1995, a transition primer had been available for teaching people already literate in French to read and write Makaa. In it, the letters of the alphabet were introduced one by one, presented in the context of words in which they occurred, and practiced by the use of different kinds of exercises, most of which involved filling in gaps in a sentence. The second half of the course contained some texts for reading and one writing exercise. The exam was a dictation, some gap-filling exercises, and a writing exercise. Those who passed the exam were considered literate in Makaa.

Except for those who attended a teacher-training course and became teachers themselves, not many of those who had passed the literacy exam seemed to practice their reading and writing skills very regularly. Apart from those reasons already mentioned [see §3 "Soccer and Scripture" and §2 "Literacy Promotion"], we felt that another principal cause for this seemed to be that the current method focused more on technical skills than on creativity. How could more creative elements be added to the course, so that people would be stimulated to continue to read and write? The first step in answering this question was to look at two existing alternative methodologies, i.e., Multi-Strategy and REFLECT. Although these two approaches aim primarily at initial literacy teaching, they might also have something to offer in the context of a transition primer.

The Multi-Strategy method offers the learners two tracks: the Workbook Track and the Story Track. The Workbook Track offers a model for teaching the letters of the alphabet. The Story Track adopts a whole language

approach, offering language in the context of stories in different forms, which are:

- experience story (the teacher presents a short activity about a theme and the class together writes a simple story about it on the blackboard),
- listening story (a story is read to the learners, and they have to answer questions),
- big book, and
- writing story (the learners have to write a short story about a theme).

Two separate teachers are used for the two tracks, as each track requires different types of teaching skills.

The REFLECT method is based on the idea that literacy is most effective when it is linked to social change. It combines literacy with development and integrates reading and writing skills in thinking about development issues and finding ways to work at them. The method offers discussion sessions and data gathering sessions about developmental issues, like identifying seasonal patterns of agricultural activities or available resources in a village. Results are recorded in the form of calendars or maps, which is the point at which literacy skills are learned.

As our transitional primer offered in itself a good basis to teach the technical ability of reading and writing, we decided to add elements of the two methods rather than to remodel the whole course. From the Multi-Strategy method, we chose the experience story, the big book, and the writing story to be used during the lessons. From REFLECT, we chose two calendars: the agriculture and the income-expenditure calendar. We developed a supplement to the transition primer, a little booklet containing three sections. Section A offered a very brief explanation of the Multi-Strategy and REFLECT elements used, and section C offered ideas for simple word games to be used during the lessons. Section B, the main section, contained a lesson plan in which suggestions were offered for using an experience story, a big book, a writing story and/or a game in combination with the lesson of the manual. The two REFLECT calendars were also scheduled in the lesson plan. Themes for the experience story were suggested, which were chosen from the lessons of the transition primer, e.g., if the word "bird" figured in lesson 6 of the primer, this was suggested as a theme in the supplement.

The ideas in the lesson plan were suggested as supplementary ideas rather than as a schedule that should be followed very strictly. The teacher started lessons with what was in the transition primer, which usually took well over an hour. If a teacher added the activities suggested in the supplement, a lesson would take two hours. Teachers were given the opportunity to choose between the suggestions according to the level of their learners and

the available time. Teachers were trained to use the supplement during the teacher's training course.

No attempt was made to follow the Multi-Strategy method of two teachers for each class, as not enough teachers were available. We practiced the different elements, including the REFLECT calendar, and every participant made one big book during the course. The five best ones were reproduced and given to all the participants to use during their classes.

The people attending the courses were very enthusiastic about the method and seemed to enjoy working with the stories. The experience story was received well, and people enjoyed doing little dramas and coming up with a story about it afterwards. In practicing the writing story, people seemed to get a taste for story writing and became aware of the fact that one does not need very advanced skills to write simple stories. The REFLECT calendars were received well, although it was a bit complicated. Some people were more creative than others in coming up with stories.

It is hard to determine whether the introduction of the supplement has had a positive impact on people's attitude towards literacy. Only a few of the trained teachers actually started classes within six months of the course. Our general impression was that some teachers made use of the suggestions offered. Abandoning the requirements for the two teachers did not seem to be a problem. The optional character of the suggestions was beneficial for different kinds of teachers. More creative teachers, who felt at ease with drama and story writing, were given some ideas to use in a structured way. Less creatively skilled teachers could at least use some of the suggested ideas. Activities suggested in the supplement could also be applied in the framework of the reading and writing clubs and as such could contribute to a more active use of reading and writing skills. A reading and writing club was a perfect context in which to do a REFLECT calendar for example.

In the Makaa project it would not have been possible to implement Multi-Strategy as a whole for reasons of time and of availability of teachers. This experiment showed that it is possible to introduce parts of the Multi-Strategy method and REFLECT methods and adapt them according to specific variable conditions.

5. **Planning as a mentoring exercise** by Ulrike Hunt and Fiona Clayton

5.1 Background

We arrived in Cameroon with a plan of what we hoped to achieve during our time there, but it laid out specific goals only for the first six months. We realized that as we did not have first-hand experience of the project, we

would have to revise the plan after a few months and be flexible in the implementation of our objectives.

Planning in this way at the start of the project also meant that we had already considered a specific and overall aim for our time in Cameroon, i.e., that of leaving local people capable of continuing the work after our departure. We were constantly considering "sustainability", our aim was to train and mentor local people.

5.2 The planning sessions

When the time came to revise the plan, we felt that it was very important to plan alongside the Makaa people who were involved in the project. By this time we had identified people who were keen to get involved and who were already holding certain roles within the project. There were, for example, five regional supervisors whose job was to encourage and supervise literacy teachers in their sector. There was also a language committee, albeit rather inactive.

In September 1999, we organized a Strategic Planning and Review (SPAR) session for all key members of the project. Invited to participate in the planning were the president of the language committee, the literacy supervisors and coordinator, the translator, and all the SIL members of the project. Our aim in planning together with the local coworkers was to introduce them to the process of planning and evaluation and then to make the next six-months' plan, with responsibility for different jobs divided up between all participants, whether SIL or local.

Before the session, participants were asked to fill in a background questionnaire. The questions were based on some of those found in the SPAR handbook and were designed to help the participants think about their areas and the needs of the people that they were trying to reach. These questionnaires also provided participants with much food for thought and encouraged the contribution of ideas during the planning session.

The planning session lasted two days. The first day was largely spent going over the preliminary questionnaire. At first this felt a little like a waste of time. However, this gave the participants time to adjust to a process where everyone was allowed to voice his thoughts rather than simply listen to the leader. It also gave them the chance to think about their regions and to reflect on what the felt needs were (mother-tongue literacy not really being one!) and to consider how, in the light of this, the project was best promoted.

We also went through the original plan the team had made before coming and evaluated it together. Had the team been able to achieve what they set out to do? If not, what factors prevented them from doing so? This gave the participants an insiders' view of where the team was coming from, and

they began to understand more the reasoning behind our involvement in certain activities.

The second day was spent planning for the following six months. Participants were encouraged to come up with ideas of activities to be done and were asked to voice opinions about whether our ideas would work or not. When it came to sharing out the responsibilities for proposed activities, all participants, whether Makaa or SIL, received specific tasks.

5.3 Effect

This planning together was a key aspect for the development of the literacy project. We found that the literacy supervisors had gained a far broader perspective of what the project was trying to achieve, and therefore, they felt much more part of it. They started to become more proactive in their roles rather than wait for instructions from us. It encouraged them to start thinking about what they wanted to see happen in their areas.

Another upshot of the planning session was that the supervisors started to meet with Nelis on a regular basis (every six weeks or so) to discuss progress and problems. This again was a key aspect in the development of the project, as it facilitated communication in a region where communication is often difficult.

5.4 Follow-up

The second session took place in May 2000 with the aims of evaluating what had been done in the previous six months and of planning the activities for the coming year. This was perhaps one of the most exciting times for us. All the SALT team members did not attend the SPAR sessions, as we were due to leave shortly. However, those that did attend mentioned how redundant they felt as the local supervisors took on an active role in leading the meeting, planning future activities, and distributing jobs.

We realized then the impact of having planned together with local people and mentored them to play an increasing part in the project. They were much more keen to be involved, having understood better the underlying aims of the project and the role of the SIL workers. They began to understand that we were not there forever, and if they wanted the project to carry on, they had to take on increasing responsibilities.

Of course, the long-term result still remains to be seen and evaluated. However, our feeling when we left the project was that the supervisors were now in a better position to maintain the project without us. They will still need some mentoring, and Nelis is still there to do that, but the foundations are there to be built on. We pray that they will take up the challenge and go for it!

In summary, the advantages of planning with members of the language project were as follows.

- The review of the previous year's activities encouraged people to be accountable to one another.
- Involvement in planning increased ownership of the project.
- Everyone involved felt free to contribute. New ideas and strategies were no longer seen as the domain of the SIL workers.
- The meetings provided a framework for the continuation of the literacy project without the presence of SIL.
- Key people in the literacy project began to see the wider picture and appreciate how decisions were made.
- Those involved learned how to plan, which is a skill that is transferable to other areas of their lives.

All these factors increased the motivation of those involved in the planning process and so increased the amount of activity going on in the project.

6. Financial sustainability: The Makaa computer services office

by Jason Hunt

6.1 Introduction

As a team of five SALT members with our team leader, Nelis van den Berg, we were able to inject a significant amount of money and manpower into the project. However, from the start we planned for the time when those resources would not be available to the Makaa project, and it would have to be sustainable by other resources. There would also be a need for new premises, since the literacy office was in the van den Bergs' compound.

We sought to build the capacity of the local people by training teachers, writers, computer operators, supervisors, and coordinators. By the time we left, there were others who were capable and confident to carry the work on. This section will describe how we sought also to leave a means of ongoing financial support for the project.

The Makaa language committee was starting to establish itself as a serious entity and showed an intention of making the project self-financing in the long term. It was clear, however, to all that there would continue to be a need for money to fund book production and literacy classes. Our solution was to set up an office in the center of Abong Mbang that would serve, not only as the new literacy center, but also as "computer services" office.

6.2 Getting started

Months before setting up the office we began training Josiane, a young Makaa woman with some secondary schooling, who was recommended to us by a member of the language committee. Despite not having touched a keyboard before, she persevered to become a competent typist and user of Microsoft Word, Windows, and Publisher. As a matter of priority, we obtained French copies of the software for use in the office.

Once a suitable location was found, we set up office in town. Josiane was also taught to handle the finances and to take charge of the office. The office had three functions: (1) as a Makaa literacy center, (2) as a computer services business, and (3) as a Christian library.

As a literacy center, it was a point where supervisors could meet to plan and coordinate the work, where teachers could pick up materials, where books could be produced, stored, and sold, and where small classes could be held. As a computer services office, Josiane could type letters, theses, invitations, and cards for the public for a charge.

The library consisted of Christian books in French and English that members of churches in town could borrow or read on the premises. Bibles were also on sale at cost price.

Josiane ran the computer services business and the library and sold Makaa publications. Because she was there full time, there was always a contact point for literacy matters, even when none of the literacy supervisors was in the office.

When Nelis first suggested the idea of the office to the Makaa supervisors, they expressed doubts that it could ever work on the grounds that we would not be able to find a Makaa person who was competent and honest enough for the job, the equipment would be stolen, and the proceeds would be "eaten" by members of the language committee.

Fortunately, we found Josiane, who was honest, hardworking, as well as a quick learner. We made the office very secure inside and out, and so far there have not been any security problems. The problem of financial management was largely solved by the creation of the Association of Supporters of the Makaa Language, effectively a board of trustees who would manage the office.

The association comprised a local Christian businessman and local pastors. The equipment in the office belonged to them, and it was they who employed Josiane and controlled the office finances. They were registered officially as a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization and licensed to run the computer services business without having to paying taxes. Nelis continues to train the association for its role.

The charges for computer jobs were calculated to provide for Josiane's wages, for the office rent and bills, and for a fund to replace the equipment as it wore out. Once the income had sufficed for these needs, the association could make any further income available for Makaa publications, classes, or workshops.

6.3 Evaluation

The office has been up and running for about six months now. Inevitably, there are manifold teething problems, but overall the office seems to be doing well. Josiane is increasingly confident in running the office, and she produces a better standard of work than rival offices in town. Accounting and recording procedures have been more difficult for her to pick up, but a businessman from the association gives her advice on this.

The library has been popular with individual church members, who often have no other source of good teaching. The reference works are even used by church leaders. Josiane has also sold many Bibles, which are otherwise difficult to obtain in the area. Pastor Bekelo, the Makaa Bible translator, also uses a small office on the premises for his work.

Literacy supervisors enjoy having their planning sessions in their new office, which is much more their territory than the office at Nelis's compound could be. One supervisor, Didier, whom we trained in desktop publishing, works there two days a week on the production of Makaa literacy materials and literature. On Saturdays, when the office is not open for business, Makaa classes have been held there.

Initially business was slow, and we wondered if the office could succeed as an income generator. However, as the academic year drew to a close, Josiane was inundated with the theses of the teacher training college students. The office even had to employ another typist for a few weeks, and the income from that month more than made up for previous shortfalls. More recently, regular cuts to the town's power supply have interrupted work to the extent that it has been necessary to buy a second-hand generator. It is still too early to say how profitable it will be as a long-term venture.

Computers are becoming more common in Cameroon. Ultimately this will mean more competition for the office, which could affect profitability, but it will also mean more people trained in computer maintenance, which may help the office's long-term sustainability. At the moment the office relies on Nelis's technical know-how, and an alternative source of technical support still has to be found. We also rely on toner cartridges from Europe for our computer, so a supply system will have to be worked out.

Even if the office pulls in only enough to pay the office running costs, then that will already be a significant contribution to the literacy project which would otherwise lack a physical base. Apart from some of the security

precautions, we would have had to invest the money in an office for the project anyway. The computer equipment was already there for the literacy work. This way we are just putting it to further use!

The success of the office will ultimately depend on the people involved. Josiane has proved to be capable and committed to the task; we hope that she will able to run the computer services independently of our help. The responsibility for the office will fall on the shoulders of the association, and we trust that they will be up to the task. The SALT team has left Abong Mbang. Nelis is in Abong Mbang to continue the training and handing-over process for nine more months. After that....

Notes on Literacy 26.3&4:99–112

Reviews

Raffini, J. P. 1996. *150 ways to increase intrinsic motivation in the classroom.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Reviewed by Scott A. Satre, SIL Cameroon Branch

1. Purpose of the book

Raffini wrote this book "to provide teachers with practical alternatives to punishment and bribery for increasing student interest and intrinsic motivation to learn" (p. 3). The basic premise behind the book is somewhat provocative. That is, that external motivations to learn—punishment and bribery—may work in the short-run, but ultimately, they have the opposite of their intended affect, hence the need for internal or "intrinsic" motivation. The book appears to be written within the Whole Language educational paradigm, but the thrust of the book is more practical than theoretical, with most of the book devoted to strategies.

2. Basic concepts of the book

2.1 Intrinsic motivation

By intrinsic motivation, Raffini means what you do for the satisfaction derived from the activity itself not for some other purpose. Thus, if a student works to get the teacher's approval in the form of a good grade or mark, he is not intrinsically motivated. He believes that everyone loves a good challenge, good meaning that it is neither too difficult nor too easy, and that that, for example, is the intrinsic motivation that keeps an adolescent playing through all the various levels of a video game. For him, then, what can intrinsically motivate students in the classroom is the desire to find and conquer challenges.

2.2 Psychoacademic needs

Raffini also believes that there are five "psychoacademic needs" which, if adequately met in the classroom, can fuel a student's academic challenge motivation. This, of course, implies that any lack in these areas would put a damper on a student's motivation to learn. The five areas are as follows.

1. **Autonomy:** students have a need to control their own decisions in learning, rather than have everything imposed on them.
2. **Competence:** students need to feel successful.
3. **Belonging and relatedness:** students need recognition and acceptance by their peers, otherwise they may feel isolated and rejected.
4. **Self-esteem:** students need to feel good about who they are. They need encouragement to explore options, good feedback, and unconditional acceptance.
5. **Involvement and stimulation/enjoyment:** students need to find enjoyment in what they do.

2.3 Target structures

Raffini uses Epstein's (1989) acronym TARGET when listing the structures in the classroom that may be manipulated by use of certain strategies (there are one hundred listed in the book) to support learning goals and intrinsic motivation. The structures are as follows.

- **(T) Task** structure: this deals with the learning activities, e.g., curriculum content and organization.
- **(A) Authority** structure: this deals with who makes the decisions in the classroom. Raffini believes in giving students as much latitude as possible to make decisions about what they learn, when, and how.
- **(R) Reward** structure: this deals with how teachers reinforce student achievement.
- **(G) Grouping** structure: this deals with how teachers divide up the students into smaller instructional groups.
- **(E) Evaluation** structure: deals with how the teacher establishes expectations and then measures and judges student performance. Raffini is very much for criterion-referenced evaluation and against norm-referenced evaluation.
- **(T) Time** structure: deals with how much time teachers allot to learning tasks. Raffini believes in giving individual students as much time as needed to achieve mastery goals for material, so that time is what varies rather than the achievement "scores".

3. Structure of the book

Overall, this is a well organized book. The introduction (chapter one) briefly explains the basic concepts used in the book, including Raffini's five basic psychoacademic needs of humans and the "target" classroom structures to be affected by the strategies he suggests. (Reference is also

made to another work by the author put out in 1993 that is supposed to be more theoretical in orientation and upon which the present work builds.)

Chapters two through six deal with each of the psychoacademic needs in turn. In each of these chapters, the author first gives ten general suggestions, which read much like wider language classroom philosophy maxims dealing with the "need" in question. He then gives twenty specific strategies, e.g., learning activities that the author has collected from various sources. (If one adds up the fifty recommendations and one hundred strategies, one comes up with the one hundred and fifty "ways" advertised in the title.) For each strategy, the author presents a **purpose** for the activity, the **TARGET areas** it touches on, which **grade levels** it might be used with, the **procedure** for doing the activity, and some possible **variations**.

The table of contents and the index in the back are very well organized. Each strategy has its own number in the table of contents, rather like the number system for the sections of a linguistic paper, e.g., strategy 3.4 is the fourth strategy in chapter three. The name of each strategy is found both in the table of contents and in the index.

4. Possible applications in SIL contexts

This book was written in English and for use in the North American context—U.S. and Canada—so it is to be expected that many of the strategies would either not be feasible in contexts where SIL works or would require extensive adaptation. For example, strategy 2.4, Floating A coupon to change the grade on the homework assignment of the student's choice, would, at the very least, require adapting to the grading system for the country one worked in. Others, like strategy 4.3, "Appreciation Web", where participants throw a ball of yarn around and say some word of appreciation to the person who caught it, would best be used as a team-building exercise.

"150 Ways"... could, however, still see some limited use as a Whole Language approach resource book, especially for a mother-tongue education program. Strategy 2.2, "Newsroom", where the students write one sentence about something that has happened in the class for inclusion in a class newsletter, could be a good assignment for more advanced literacy classes.

Many of the recommendations in chapters two through six are more generally applicable than the strategies. Here one may find good advice for those in mentoring roles (even parents!). This is not surprising, since the Whole Language approach is closely associated with informal learning, as might occur in a family context. In chapter 5, "Strategies for Enhancing Student Self-esteem", recommendation #6 is a good example of this.

> **Help students learn to accept their mistakes and successes by occasionally modeling an analysis of your own errors and achievements.** Modeling self-talk that demonstrates your acceptance of mistakes or reinforces your achievements helps students appreciate their own strengths and limitations (e.g., "It looks as if I have added incorrectly; I'll have to be more careful next time," or "I feel wonderful about today's lesson; I worked hard preparing it, and everyone met the objectives"). (p. 182)

In regard to literacy motivation in contexts where SIL works, this book is perhaps strongest in its setting forth of principles of motivation and weakest or least useful in the specific learning activities it suggests.

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Reviewed by Wi-vun Taiffalo Chiung, University of Texas at Arlington

In the Han cultural areas, such as China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam, the public's strong demands for literacy have focused efforts on language and orthographic reform since the nineteenth century. Debates on standardization of the national language and on the use of the Han characters have been going on for more than a hundred years. Chen's book surveys the promotion of Mandarin Chinese and the reforms of Han writing in the case of China. The book presents a comprehensive account of the development of Modern Chinese from the late nineteenth century up to the 1990s. The book is divided into three parts: 1) modern spoken Chinese, 2) modern written Chinese, and 3) the modern Chinese writing system. Each part consists of several chapters; some chapters in this book are based on Chen's previous works published in various journals.

The first part of the book (i.e., modern spoken Chinese) covers three chapters entitled, "Establishment and Promotion of Modern Spoken Chinese", "Norms and Variations of Modern Standard Chinese", and "The Standard and Dialects". Since the middle of the nineteenth century, China had suffered from western colonialism. In that situation, education was considered as important tool to equip and modernize China. In order to educate people, language reform, including both spoken and written forms, was taken as one of the most urgent aspects. In China, there are several different so-called "dialects", such as Mandarin, Southern Min, Hakka, and Cantonese that are mutually unintelligible. Under the assumption that linguistic uniformity was a necessary precondition for the unity of the country, Mandarin, which had served as the official language of three successive dynasties for hundreds of years, was finally chosen as the national language of China in the early part of the twentieth century. Although Mandarin based on the Beijing dialect had been chosen as the norm of modern standard Chinese, it was not widespread until the second half of the twentieth century. The detailed process of unification and standardization of the Chinese national language is well addressed in the first part of Chen's book.

Many Chinese scholars prefer to use "dialect", rather than "language" to refer to Southern Min, Hakka, Cantonese, and other Han languages. In Chen's book, he also uses the term "dialect", even though he admits that these dialects are mutually unintelligible. Thus, the term "dialect" may mislead the readers about the complexity of languages in China. In addition, Chen does not mention any ethnic minority reactions to the promotion

of Mandarin. It seems that the book was written from the Han people's perspective rather than a broader national perspective. I am wondering how many of the ethnic minorities recognize Mandarin as the national language and how many of them recognize themselves as members of the Chinese nation. In the case of Taiwan, Chen fails to explain why Mandarin was more successfully promoted in Taiwan than in China. As a matter of fact, the reason that Mandarin was well promoted and received the national status in Taiwan is because of the Chinese KMT's[1] "colonial" policy, rather than local people's "enthusiasm" (p.31). When the Chinese KMT took over Taiwan in 1945, most local people identified themselves as Taiwanese rather than Chinese. This situation forced the Chinese KMT to adopt a severe policy of assimilation, i.e., to convert the Taiwanese into the Chinese people through the monolingual policy and Chinese education in the national education system.

Modern written Chinese is the theme of the second part of this book. This part includes three chapters: "Development and Promotion of Modern Written Chinese", "Norms and Variations of Modern Written Chinese", and "Dialect Writing". Chen describes how *baihua*, the colloquial speech, gradually replaced *wenyan*, the classical literary language, and finally became the modern standard written Chinese. The *wenyen* writing style, which divorces from people's colloquial speech, had dominated in the Han cultural areas for two thousands years prior to the twentieth century. In China, *wenyan* was finally replaced by *baihua*, which is based on the daily speech of educated Mandarin speakers. Chen also analyzes the development of dialect writing, especially in the case of Southern Min writing in Taiwan. In China, people who spoke different "dialects" were unified by the *wenyen* writing. After *wenyen* was replaced, *baihua*, based on Mandarin speakers, substitutes for *wenyen* in unifying the "Chinese" people. Chen concludes that "the majority of the Chinese population, even in Taiwan, are not convinced that standardization of dialect writing and its widespread use will bring them greater benefits" (p.128).

Chen attributes the immature development of dialect writing to the public's judgment and decision on the costs and benefits. However, he was not aware if the public choose to develop dialect writing; the political assumption of "uniformity is necessary for the unity of the country" had depressed the development of dialect writing. In fact, Mandarin writing, to non-Mandarin speakers, is just like *wenyen* to the *baihua* speakers. In other words, as Chen mentioned, Mandarin writing is promoted at all non-Mandarin speakers' expense (p. 114).

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[1]KMT refers to the *Kuomintang* or Chinese Nationalist, which is a political party led by Chiang Kai-shek in the 1940s.

The third part of Chen's book discusses the nature of modern Chinese writing. This part consists of five chapters: "Basic Features of the Chinese Writing System", "Simplification of the Traditional Writing System", "Phonetization of Chinese", "Use and Reform of the Chinese Writing System", and "Conclusion". Chen points out two major strengths of the Chinese script: 1) its capacity to differentiate homophonous morphemes, and 2) its versatility in bridging time and dialects. On the other hand, the difficulty of learning and use is the worst disadvantage of the Chinese script. For example, a college-educated Chinese knows between 3,500–4,000 characters (Norman 1988:73). These characters account for only part of the Hanzi inventory, i.e., a total of 56,000 characters collected in the *Xiandai Hanyu Da Zidian*, the modern Chinese dictionary. Owing to the disadvantages of the characters, simplification and phonetization have been proposed to improve the Chinese writing system. Although simplified characters have been the official script for decades in China, the complex and the simplified characters are used in a mixed way on some occasions. The phonetization schemes, such as Bopomo and Pinyin, are employed only as a supplementary tool for learning Mandarin. The details of their developments are well described in this part of the book.

Chen points out that differentiating homophonous morphemes is a strength of Han character (in Chen's word, Chinese script). In fact, not only can Han characters differentiate homophonous morphemes but also the phonetization. For example, Kho-kun is proposed by Tan Kheng-Chiu as a system to write Taiwanese. Basically, Tan defines sixty categories with sixty simple symbols to refer to different semantic categories of words. He adds a symbol to each romanized Taiwanese word, so readers can distinguish the different meaning from the same pronunciation of the words. Regarding Han characters, as DeFrancis (1996:40) writes, "the inefficiency of the system stems precisely from its clumsy method of sound representation and the added complication of an even more clumsy system of semantic determinatives." In Chen's opinion, versatility is another virtue of Han characters. However, he seems to ignore that although readers may still recognize each individual character in an ancient text, the readers can hardly understand the whole meaning of the text. Chen is skeptical concerning the possibility of romanization, and he gave the examples of Taiwan and Japan to show Han characters can survive in the modern society. He does not mention, however, that Vietnamese, which used to use Han characters, has converted Han into romanization for hundreds of years. The pattern of writing reform in Asia is the same as Gelb mentioned in his famous book about the world's writing reforms. "[I]n all cases it was the foreigners who were not afraid to break away from sacred traditions and were thus able to introduce reforms which led to new and revolutionary developments" (Gelb 1952:196). Gelb's observation also accounts for why

orthographic reform in China is much more difficult than in Vietnam, Korea, or Japan.

In short, this book contains rich references with regard to the development of modern standard Chinese. Although Chen's interpretation and analysis may not satisfy all readers, it is still a good introductory text on the development of the national language in China.

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David Barton and Mary Hamilton. 1998. *Local literacies: Reading and writing in one community*. London: Routledge

Reviewed by Fiona Holburn, UK

This book is a study of every day reading and writing, concentrated within a defined community in Britain. The authors are both based at Lancaster University where David Barton is senior lecturer in the Department of Linguistics, and Mary Hamilton is Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Educational Research. They have worked together on several projects including, "Worlds of Literacy", (1994) and are founder members of the national network, Research and Practice in Adult Literacy (RaPal).

Barton and Hamilton analyze how people use literacy in their every day lives. They do not allow the reader to think of reading and writing simply as a system of grammatical codes to be understood and utilized, but in a rather more complex way they show how literacy is always being put in the context of human relationships and their various activities. In this sense they talk about "literacies" rather than just literacy.

The book puts forward three main aims:

- to offer a detailed specific description of literacy practices in a local community at one point in time,
- to link literacy to a general understanding of social practices, and to how people make sense of their lives through their everyday practices. The book draws attention to hidden vernacular literacies, and
- to offer an alternative public discourse which brings to the fore the role of literacy as a communal resource contributing to the quality of local life.

The book is divided into three sections.

First: The theory of literacy. The starting point of the authors' approach is the assertion that literacy is a social practice. They also state that the expression "literacy practices" is an effective way of putting across the notion that reading and writing are inextricably bound into and, in fact, help to shape social structures.

Their theory that literacy is a social practice is presented as a series of six propositions found on page 6.

- Literacy is best understood as a set of social practices; these can be inferred from events, which are mediated by written texts.
- There are different literacies associated with different domains of life.

- Literacy practices are patterned by social institutions and power relationships, and some literacies become more dominant, visible, and influential than others do.
- Literacy practices are purposeful and embedded in broader social goals and cultural practices.
- Literacy is historically situated.
- Literacy practices change, and new ones are frequently acquired through processes of informal learning and sense making.

Their interest is in social practices in which literacy has a role, hence the term "literacy practices".

Second: An in depth study had been carried out on ten individuals (one multilingual) and two couples. From these fourteen people, four were selected and a detailed picture of their literacy practices described. The four people (using assumed names) were as follows.

1. Harry Graham is a retired fire fighter with two children and grandchildren. His special interests were war stories, going to the library, and junk mail.
2. Shirley Bowker, in her early thirties, lives with her husband and two boys. At the time of the interview she was unemployed. She was secretary of the residents' association. She was also interested in home-school relations and a housing action project. She had a ruling passion to fight injustice and bring about change.
3. June Marsh, in her mid-forties, has four grown children. She was passionate about animals. She was a busy person with many people depending on her. Literacy was of some use to her, but she did not rate it very highly. She was more interested in the various media communications including a CB radio. Her husband did not like her to have her head buried in a book.
4. Cliff Holt, in his mid-fifties, was on disability benefits. He has grown children. His main themes during the interviews were medical conditions and betting. His ruling passions, however, were leisure and pleasure. Literacy was important in this area, as he wrote letters to some of his favorite comedy artists.

Third: A number of themes and patterns of literacy are explored to see if there is a common link. Some of the themes were as follows.

- The diversity of literacies within the home. Some examples include books, magazines and newspapers, memory lists, junk mail, diaries, calendars, bills, notice boards, and catalogues, to name a few.

- Multilingual literacies. This was examined by looking at the literacy practices of one multilingual person called Mumtaz Patel. She had three children. She was born in India but came to England while she was still a young child. She described herself as British with Muslim religion. She speaks Gujarati and English in the home and often reads the Koran in Arabic. The children go to a Catholic school. They also speak Gujarati but as yet do not write it.
- Literacy at home and in the school. Much was said about parental support.
- Literacies within local groups and organizations. There is a prevalence of self-organized local groups with literacy particularly needed by those that were structuring and running the groups.
- Vernacular literacies. These are learned informally usually within the home and are linked to everyday experiences but are often less valued by society. Six areas of life were mentioned where vernacular literacy came into play.
    - Organizing life. Examples include calendars and notice boards for organizing social activities, lists relating to such things as weekly finances, shopping, Christmas card addresses, and chores.
    - Personal communication. This includes cards and letters sent to family and friends on anniversaries, birthdays, or Christmas, and all sorts of notes left for people in the family, maybe on the stairs to be seen; they may be factual or emotional.
    - Private leisure. This would include reading books, newspapers, and magazines and writing poetry.
    - Documenting life. Items such as birth or marriage certificates, school reports, and diaries would be included. Some people write their memoirs or a family history.
    - Sense-making. Instruction booklets on gadgets, devotional reading, and reading on particular topics like a local grievance or hobbies are some examples.
    - Social participation. This includes various clubs, local politics, and local newsletters.

This book makes a very interesting read, but having been written from a Western perspective, would it be helpful when thinking about setting up literacy programs in developing countries?

It researches a culture, which for most of us is quite familiar. The authors move us from an historical overview of a specific geographical area to examining the literacy profiles of four individuals, trying to understand the implication of literacy in their lives. It is made clear that new practices are

built out of old in individual people's lives, and the quality of personal networks can also be important especially amongst those who have difficulty in reading and writing. This latter comment is applicable in any situation. One of the people mentioned had no problem with literacy, but it was not very important for her. However, it did allow her to be involved in decision making within the family, which might not have otherwise happened, as she kept the accounts. Numeracy, which also included weights and measures, was therefore seen as an important facet of literacy. This could also be an important area in developing countries especially among women. It was brought out quite clearly that strong interests encourage literacy. In this context it was often relating to hobbies, but it was also mentioned that "religious" people, either Christians or Muslims, wanted to learn to read so that they could read either the Bible or Koran. This would again be applicable in developing country situations. One unexpected feature was the importance that libraries played in the lives of many people, therefore it would certainly also be important in developing countries.

An interesting feature in "Local Literacies" is a section on how best to use the book, which could be very valuable for group discussions. It could also be a very useful tool for people doing research into literacy, as there is a section in one of the appendices on how to go about this.

All in all, this book is an enjoyable read, giving plenty of food for thought. It demonstrates quite clearly how people's lives are shaped by their literacy practices and proves that it is often their deepest interests that have provided the motivation for continuing interest in literacy. This would be true in developing countries as well.

Richards, Jack C. 1998. *Beyond training: Perspectives on language teacher education.* Cambridge University Press. 190 pp. $20.95 paperback.

Reviewed by Craig Soderberg, SIL

Beyond Training is one of the thirty-one books in the Cambridge Language Teaching Library, which deals with various aspects of language teaching, language learning, and other classroom issues. It is also one of the five books authored by Richards in that same library. The book is primarily targeting an audience of teachers of English as a second language. It is less relevant to the field of descriptive linguistics. However, it seemed to be a bit dry and technical even to one with an interest in language teaching.

The book is divided into the following four sections: theories of second language teaching, perspectives on teacher thinking, examining teacher education practices, and entering the field of language education. Each of these four sections is comprised of one, two, or three chapters that delve into further detail.

Richards purports to focus on the language learning process rather than the "delivery of teacher education programs" (vii). I feel that he did stay within this guideline. By doing so, the more ambiguous issue arose: how the content of language teaching is learned, and therefore, how it can be taught most effectively.

The book begins with an overview of the field of second language teacher education (SLTE) by considering constituent domains of knowledge, skill, understanding, and awareness, as well as different types of teaching activities that can be used. Then the first section, "Theories of Second Language Teaching", discusses what type of teacher the program is intended to graduate and what attitudes toward research, conventional wisdom, experiential knowledge, and self-development the graduate of the program is expected to have.

The next section, "Perspectives on Teacher Thinking", explores various conceptualizations of the nature of teaching, which include teaching as the application of research findings and teaching as the application of craft knowledge. But the perspective that Richards seems to focus on is the notion of teaching as a thinking activity. Here Richards looks at various case studies and shows various differences between "novice teachers" and "experienced teachers" in their abilities related to thinking and decision making.

In the third section, "Examining Teacher Education Practices", Richards focuses on three areas: textbooks, classroom observation, and journal writing. In this area, Richards suggests that journal writing can provide an

opportunity for teachers to write reflectively about their teaching, though in itself it does not necessarily promote critical reflection. Richards also notes that "reflective classroom observation" can help teachers develop a deeper understanding of themselves as teachers and so be better prepared to make decisions about their own teaching.

The last section of the book, "Entering the Field of Language Education", concludes by stating that an extended period of classroom experience combined with repeated cycles of guided reflection is the most effective way to prepare teachers in the long run. This suggests a model of teacher preparation using mentors in the university sector who work closely with individual teachers to help them adapt their teaching to the realities of their teaching contexts.

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